

*Mundane
To
Spiritual*

Swami Satchidananda



MUNDANE TO SPIRITUAL

COMPILED MESSAGES

of

SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA



ANANDASHRAM

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KANHANGAD, KERALA.



Beloved Papa Swami Ramdas & Puja Mataji Krishnabai



Pujya Swami Satchidanandaji

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We have immense pleasure in bringing out this book **'MUNDANE TO SPIRITUAL'** coinciding with the birthday of Puja Swami Satchidanandaji. Part I of this book contains pointed hints culled out from Puja Swamiji's letters to devotees while Part II covers the gist of messages delivered by Swamiji on various occasions.

Puja Swamiji lays great emphasis on the fact that in the life of an aspirant **everything is spiritual and therefore there is nothing that can be called mundane.** Swamiji adds that this state can be achieved by divinising all our thoughts, words and actions, i.e bringing in God in each and every sphere of one's life, following the life and teachings of the great masters — Beloved Papa and Puja Mataji

Puja Swamiji refers to Sadguru Swami Ramdas as Beloved Papa and Mother Krishnabai as Puja Mataji. As God and Guru are one, Beloved Papa is also referred to as the almighty Lord of the universe, wherever the occasion arises in these compilations.

We are sure, by making an earnest attempt to translate the teachings of Swamiji into our work-a-day life, we will be moving towards divinising our thoughts and actions thus paving the way for attaining the Ultimate.

ANANDASHRAM
12th November 1998

PREFACE

By
Swami Satchidananda

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Though it is not in my nature to give lectures or discourses, it became necessary to address friends who gather on special occasions like the Jayanthi and Mahasamadhi days of Beloved Param Puja Papa and Param Puja Mataji. It is also necessary daily to reply to quite a few letters from friends seeking advice on certain complicated matters which they considered serious. In most cases they were mundane while in some cases they related to Sadhana.

This book is a collection of the synopsis of the short talks referred to above and extracts from the replies to various letters.

It will be observed that most of the problems of an individual arise because of the disturbed state of mind. A mind in turmoil finds it difficult to face the battle of life successfully and is so much agitated that it reaches almost a state of frustration. A calm and cool mind alone can think properly and arrive at the right decision. So the solution is to make the mind calm. The way suggested for the same and repeated in my replies is to take to the chanting of God's Name.

Only when human efforts fail and force us to succumb to the trying conditions, we realise that we should not depend upon mundane things for real and everlasting happiness but should invoke divine intervention by catching hold of the Lord's feet. To get at His lotus feet and hold on to them, the easiest way is to chant His holy and all-powerful Name as much as possible with all love and devotion and with a prayer coming from the bottom of the heart to intervene in the matter and save us from the perilous predicament. Sincere prayers are sure to be answered.

This practice will also give us the experience that communing with God as often as possible and ultimately without break is the only way to live peacefully and happily making life flow smoothly, carrying God with us always, or rather to be conscious of God's eternal presence. Total dependence upon God will free us completely from the worldly worries and anxieties and ultimately lead to a state where everything is Divine — Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

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“It is upto you to make your life either harmonious or chaotic. If you attune with God, the Master of harmonies, and make Him your sole Companion, Guide and Refuge, you will fill it with true beauty, peace and equality. Then, eternal music is produced in you and divine splendour illumines every aspect of your life. On the contrary, if your life is ruled and controlled by egoism, all the forces within you, mental and physical, will create a state of discord and confusion.”

—SWAMI RAMDAS

PART I
SWAMIJI ANSWERS

1. No difference between mundane and spiritual life

We will not see any difference between mundane duties and spiritual practices if we train our mind to see everything as God, God in everything and everything in God with the result all our activities become worship to God. This practice must go on without break and it will keep us always in the higher plane of consciousness.

2. All are He only

The seen and the unseen are both God, and God alone is and there is nothing but God. It is He alone who is holding inspiring *Satsang* in one place, doing business in another place, committing so-called crime elsewhere. The moment we see that it is He alone who is acting in these roles, we see nothing good or bad as we are transported to a higher plane of consciousness. Our effort must be only to stay in that plane constantly.

God has given different capacities and talents to different individuals. Therefore some are very intelligent, some moderate and some below normal. We should be happy with whatever God has given us and should try to make the best of it. After all, it is God Himself

who is playing this world-*lila*, putting on different garbs to fulfill His will. When you see others more talented than you, be happy that God is playing that part through them.

3. The world is exactly as it should be

Nothing in the world will disturb us if we take it that the Lord Himself, in His innumerable forms plays the *Lila* eternally. Unless we raise ourselves to a higher plane of consciousness fromn where we can visualize everything clearly, it is difficult to solve our problems in the world. We cannot change what is happening in the world but we can change our attitude towards the happenings by looking upon them as the play of the Lord.

As Beloved Papa has written in one of his books: "The world is exactly as it should be". If we take such a detached view, we can remain happy in all conditions and circumstances and also enjoy the world-game, wherever He chooses to place us and whatever part He wills we should play. When we take this view, **there is nothing spiritual or non-spiritual**. Everything is He.

4. Have always loving attitude

It is possible, though it may be difficult, to change the attitude of another by your own effort, i.e. by loving him whole-heartedly in

spite of all the insults he hurls on you. Be calm and serene and talk to him lovingly. Running away from the situation is not the solution. You must face it and conquer it. Love is the way.

5. All happens by God's will

God's power is absolute. No other power is there and as such, whatever happens — the smallest thing to the highest thing — all happen by His will only. So, if we live always in a state of absolute surrender, we will have peace and happiness. Surrender to God means to be conscious that it is His power that is working in the entire universe through the innumerable forms including your body. Surrender does not mean inactivity or indifference nor does it relate to the weak. It requires immense strength. Surrender is surrender and there is only one type of surrender — that is absolute. There is no shortcut for this. As Beloved Papa used to put it, constant remembrance of God, absolute surrender to God's will and God-realisation mean the same thing. They are not different. So, if there can be a shortcut for realisation, then, you can say there can be a shortcut for surrender.

The little 'I' in us tries to come up again and again and disturb the peace that we are having. This can be removed only by intense

Sadhana; whatever *Sadhana* it is. In our case, as Beloved Papa has taught us, it is the chanting of *Ram Nam* constantly and training the mind to accept that everything happens by the supreme will of God.

6. Accept what saints say unreservedly

. When we are living with saints, we should always feel that whatever the saints say is perfectly all right and we have only to abide by what they say. If they ask us to do something, we have only to do it. In some cases what happens is that, we feel: "The saint has asked me to do such and such a thing, but I feel it is not correct." Here that 'I feel' means 'I' asserts itself and tries to find fault with what the saint says. On such occasions, if we train the mind to accept unquestioningly what the saint says and do exactly as he wants us to do, there will be no trouble at all and gradually our ego will learn to submit itself to obeying the saint's commands or the saint's wishes. This should not only apply in the case of saints but also with everybody.

7. God's ways are mysterious.

God comes in different forms. While through most of the forms He expresses his love and devotion, through a few forms He chooses to slander Himself. When you hear

Him slandering, you may mentally say to yourself, “Oh Lord, what a wonderful player You are! In many forms I see You praising and praying to Yourself, but in one or two forms I see You slandering Yourself”. Thus see Him only, in both. You will do well in keeping mum, mentally chanting *Ram Nam*.

8. On death

Our spiritual background should help in giving us courage and strength to face any situation bravely by knowing the Truth. As you know fully well, one day or the other we have to drop this body. Now that your father is deceased, the inevitable has happened, that too after he has lived his life fully, successfully and usefully. Of course all of you would have loved to have him with you for many more years, not realising at the same time that he himself would not have welcomed the ever-dreaded decrepit condition. It is also not right on your part to feel that you could have done something to prolong his life. These are not in our hands. Things happen as ordained by Him. So console yourself that you were extremely lucky to have been the son of such a wonderful soul and try to live as he did.

9. Go beyond the surface

A *Sadhaka*, should not harbour any ill-feeling towards anybody who has ever done

great harm to him and other members of the family. Instead, he should forgive them and give them all his love. This is absolutely necessary for making his mind pure and to remain at peace. So, if he sees selfishness, arrogance and all sorts of evil on the surface, he should go deeper, beyond the surface, and then he will find that it is the Lord Himself, in everyone. Hence he should give his whole-hearted love to everybody and keep the mind perfectly pure. Whenever he has a reason to become upset because of somebody's talk or actions, he should immediately bring to his mind the truth that it is God Himself playing the game. If not, the mind will become more and more disturbed and consequently make him very unhappy.

10. No planning for the future

You have found from experience that your plans do not work. It is His plan alone that works. So do not have any desire for this or that in your mind. Instead, leave everything in His hands. He will show you what to do and guide you from moment to moment. Try to forget the past as far as possible and be free from anxieties about the future. You must understand that there is practically nobody in the world who is completely free from problems. Many things happen in the world

that may not be to our liking. When we realise the world as unreal, naturally, all the sufferings in the world will also be known as unreal. Without *Sadhana* we are too much attached to the physical body which alone we consider as real. If we wish to remain happy and peaceful we should try to unquestioningly surrender to His will in all matters. He will then arrange everything in His own beautiful way. A purified mind alone can accept things in the right manner

11. Be watchful of ego's play

It is natural for people, who have had no contact with saints and who know nothing about spiritual life, to assert their ego. That is the only way they carry on their life. They do not know of a higher life. If you talk to them about getting rid of the ego, they will wonder how they can carry on without the ego.

But, that is no excuse for those who call themselves devotees and still assert their ego, because the very purpose of their taking to a spiritual life is to get rid of the ego. So, when they assert their ego in each and every action they are only outwardly showing that they are leading a spiritual life but, inwardly, they are not. Ego may appear to have left us, but, mysteriously, it enters through the back door, as it were, and troubles us. We may be

under the impression that we have become very humble, that our surrender is complete and our ego-sense is almost gone and all that, but, suddenly, when something happens, we find that our ego is very much there, as strong as ever! Now, what should we do to get rid of it? We should be really honest to ourselves in our aspiration to get rid of the ego and realise God.

To kill Ravana, the Lord had to take *Avatar* as Rama. Our ego is compared to Ravana and so God has to come in some form or the other to destroy it. Taking *Ram Nam* is as good as making God's presence felt in us, which alone will gradually destroy the ego. If not *Ram Nam* it must be self-enquiry or some *Yoga* practice. Whatever it is, one has to aspire intensely for God-realisation and thus get the ego effaced slowly but steadily. There cannot be any other way.

12. Think, talk and act as becoming of an aspirant

Take the case of people who are staying in Ashrams. They have apparently come for God-realisation, but the way some of them live, talk and conduct themselves only goes to show that their aspiration is purely superficial and nothing deep. If one is a real aspirant, he will be watchful every minute of his life, about what

he thinks, what he says or what he does. It will help him go forward on the spiritual path. If he understands that any particular thought, talk or act will not help him, he will sincerely avoid it. Thus, every moment, we should remember that we are spiritual aspirants and think, talk and act as becoming of an aspirant. We should not think that our *Sadhana* is only to be practised in our Guru's presence. When we become *Sadhakas*, we are *Sadhakas* for all the twenty-four hours. Never forget that.

13. Sadhaka's attitude in Ashram life

An Ashram is the ideal place where *Sadhakas* can do a lot for their spiritual upliftment and, also, set a high standard in behaviour by their example. An Ashram is the ideal place where many devotees come in the hope of getting some peace and help in their spiritual quest. So, every inmate of the Ashram, who regards himself as a spiritual aspirant, should in his own way help everybody visiting the Ashram to enjoy a sense of peace. For this, he or she must have achieved some measure of peace by strict spiritual discipline.

In a family, we can make everyone happy only if we are anchored in pure love and have identical interests. That should be more so in the Ashram. Here, we meet people with different cultural backgrounds. We should be

able to accept them as our very own and treat them with love and consideration. When anybody comes, we should feel that God Himself has come in that particular form seeking help materially or spiritually and we should be prepared to help him. How can we give help? Receive him first lovingly, find out what he wants and see if we can help him in any way. If he is a spiritual seeker, we may guide him suitably. If he needs material help, we can do whatever is possible and make him feel that he is one with us in spirit.

14. Be soft-hearted

People who come to the Ashram for material help or for spiritual help should not have to return empty-handed. This help may be given only to the extent possible. If we cannot or are not in a position to give anything, we can at least give them sweet and loving words and they will have the satisfaction that they have received a kind reply from us. We should make it a point never to send anyone away with a bitter heart. If the *Sadhakas* are careful at least in this regard, they will be able to develop humility in themselves and, thereby, by degrees erase their ego and progress on the path.

Mataji would say that devotees in the Ashram can do a lot by way of service. It is not

always necessary to spend money to serve others. What is needed is that we should wish well of everybody and pray for the world's welfare. Have some feeling for them. By feeling for others, we make our heart softer and softer. Only in a very soft heart God will reveal Himself.

15. Deal with sympathetic calmness

In an Ashram, there may be many problems cropping up daily. Our concern primarily should be how to solve the problems to the benefit of all concerned. If we get angry and shout at others we fail. On the other hand, if we study the problems very carefully, having regard for the other's difficulties, we will deal with them with sympathetic calmness and will arrive at a satisfactory solution.

16. Carry Ashram atmosphere

Many people say that whenever they are in the Ashram they enjoy peace of mind and *Nama Smaran* most of the time, feeling like a freshly-charged battery, but this power wanes away after they return home.

It is natural that from the elevating atmosphere of the Ashram, your *Nama Japa* gains in quality and quantity. When you go away from the Ashram, you should try to retain the momentum. Though it is difficult,

it is not impossible. Any atmosphere is good for chanting *Ram Nam*, if we only change our attitude towards it. Instead of seeing things as they are, try to see them as forms of Beloved Papa, the Lord of the universe, Himself. You will then find that you can maintain in the house the same peace and serenity that you enjoy in the Ashram.

It is not enough if you just enjoy your stay in the Ashram. What is more important is that your Ashram experience should sustain you wherever you are.

17. Enrich life while in Ashram

When a devotee plans to visit an Ashram, he should be clear in his mind about the purpose for which he is undertaking such a trip. Normally it is done to free himself from the mundane tensions or to boost his aspiration for spiritual progress by actively participating in the Ashram programmes or to derive inexplicable joy from the *Satsang* in the Ashram. As Beloved Papa used to say, "An Ashram is a place where you can have your batteries recharged". When this is clear, the first pre-requisite is to adjust and adapt to the situations in the Ashram, leaving no room in the mind to grumble about anything. While in the Ashram, efforts should be to train oneself to lead an austere life and be prepared

to love and serve all with humility and to keep constant remembrance of God. He must take care not to expect the same facilities/comforts he has in his place. Instead, he should try to carry the Ashram atmosphere to his place.

Every Ashram is different from the others with its own limitations in comforts that can be made available to devotees. He who visits an Ashram should feel happy with whatever conveniences available there. When such an attitude is developed, the visit will not only make his stay in the Ashram fruitful but also enrich his life in all its aspects.

18. Thou art the doer or the non-doe

Most sages and scriptures say "You are not the doer, you are the non-doe, you are the witness." In either case, whether you say 'I am the doer' or 'I am the non-doe', you are giving emphasis to the 'I'. That is what Mataji wanted us to remove. Do not say 'I'. Say, 'It is Thou who art the doer or non-doe'. By doing so, you cease to associate yourself with the individual consciousness. What then remains is universal consciousness.

19. Doing *Sadhana* at home

If you aspire for a spiritual life, it is not necessary that you should resort to an Ashram. You can do your *Sadhana* at home and, at the

same time, take up some work that is useful to you and also to others. What is required is an intense aspiration to realise your oneness with God by His constant remembrance through repetition of His holy Name, and the performance of all your actions as His service. If you do this, you are sure to progress on the spiritual path and remain happy and peaceful in all conditions and circumstances.

20. Adjust to all conditions cheerfully

We can be happy in life only if we are able to adjust to all conditions. We should be happy in any situation God places us. What is important is to keep our mind ever dwelling on Him. When that is done, other things do not matter.

Beloved Papa had placed you in the so-called favourable situation so far, where you had nothing to complain about. Now it is Papa who has put you in a different situation. You should be able to accept it as brought about by His will and remain happy. Really, if you believe that it is Beloved Papa who is arranging everything in everybody's life, you will have no reason to complain at all. "Thy will be done" should be your guiding principle in everything.

21. Individual will and Divine Will

While 'Individual will' originates from the sense of individuality, viz, body, mind,

intellect and senses, 'Divine Will' stems from the awareness of the Reality. In other words, the former is based on the individual standpoint whereas the latter is viewed from the universal aspect. The sense of individuality and individual will are only super-imposed and are not real. In all matters, it is the will of God that rules. So ours is to act as He prompts from within and leave the rest in His safe hands.

22. Significance of *Namaskar*

Namaskar is to indicate one's reverence for the other. It is also an attitude of surrender. We offer *Dandavat Namaskars* to the deity or a saint which means: 'I surrender completely at Your feet.' It is the surrender of our little "self" to the Universal "Self" and, if this attitude is maintained, *Namaskar* will be extremely helpful. Whenever you do *Namaskar*, feel that you are prostrating yourself before the Supreme Being who has taken that form and stands before you. If it is a saint who receives the *Namaskar*, his attitude will not be of one receiving a *Namaskar* from someone. He has already become one with the Universal and Absolute Existence and he looks upon everyone in the universe as his own form. He sees only Ram in everyone. So, it is Ram in one form that prostrates Himself before Ram

in another form. If a devotee prays to the saint for knowledge, the saint will only feel that Ram in that form is putting on the veil of ignorance and he blesses the devotee with knowledge.

23. Mind and ego after God-realisation

When one has realised God, the sense of 'I-ness' completely disappears. There is only God, who is working through one. One does not have the feeling that one is doing or one is planning. When our Sadguru Beloved Papa was once asked how he was doing things when he had no mind at all, he explained that it was not correct to say that he had no mind. It was actually a most purified mind. It was also not correct to say that he had absolutely no ego. He had a very subtle, purified ego.

So God-realised ones maintain a sense of individuality, a very subtle individuality. All the same, they become instruments in the hands of God. We cannot then say which part of the 'planning' is done by God, which part is not done by God and so on. If Papa were asked, he would say: 'Ramdas is simply an instrument in God's hands.' God did everything through him.

Once when Papa did something and later realised that it was a mistake he remarked: "Oh! Ramdas made a mistake." Somebody then asked him: "Does God commit

mistakes?” Papa replied: “Why not? For the sake of Lila, He does everything.” So, every impulse, every feeling God-realised ones have, is God’s.

24. Truth experienced only in pure mind

After reading Beloved Papa’s books, you must have understood that we are not merely the body, mind, intellect or senses. We are the eternal, infinite Truth, having a body, mind etc. That Truth, being without any name and form, cannot be seen by the physical eyes. It is Pure Consciousness. You can only imagine what it is by looking at the sky and seeing the infinite space. Though this is not a very good comparison, by this you will get an idea of its all-pervasiveness. It cannot be known through the mind and intellect but can be experienced when the mind is still.

25. Realisation not dependent on age

There are instances of *Sadhakas* attaining realisation at the age of 18, 28 and 38. Mataji had realised at the age of 28; Beloved Papa at the age of 38. There may be other instances of devotees attaining realisation after they had crossed 60 but we do not know. But, this should not dishearten us. Realisation is possible at any age — there is no age bar for it.

In the scriptures, there is the story of a

king. He was able to get realisation from the Guru in the fraction of a second. He was about to mount his horse and had put one leg over the saddle. Before he could put up the other leg, he got realisation. So nothing is impossible if God so wills. Ours is to try, do our *Sadhana* intensely and leave everything to God.

26. Make the best of life.

Some devotees get fed up with life and want to get out of the bondage of the body but do not know how. The question of how long one is to live is not in one's hands. So, instead of getting fed up with life, let us make the best possible use of it. If we try to look upon the entire world as the manifestation of God and accept that every event happens by His will, we can be full of joy in all conditions and circumstances. As a wise man has said: "We cannot change the entire world but, by changing our attitude towards the world, we can be always happy."

27. Be happy always

In one's life, so many things happen as one has to deal with people of different types and characters. You may like them or dislike them. Similarly others, in turn, may like you or dislike you. These are all part of the worldly game. So far as you are concerned, try to love

even those who hate you. We are all Beloved Papa's children and, as such, we should try to live up to Beloved Papa's teachings which say that in the universe, we are all brothers and sisters and, therefore, one family. So, wherever you are, you should feel you are in Beloved Papa's mansion and, therefore, happy. The foundation for this is the chanting of the holy *Ram Nam*. If you keep chanting the Divine Name, all will go well with you and you will feel at home everywhere, and at all times.

28. Don't overstay with the Guru

Papa and Mataji both had said that *Sadhakas* should not stay with their Guru or near their Guru too long. The simile given by Papa was that a small seedling, planted under a huge tree, would not grow properly. The shade may be necessary for some time, but, after a while, it has to be planted in the open so that it may get proper sunshine and grow in full.

29. *Sadhakas* who find fault with the Guru

Sadhakas are supposed to look upon their Guru, and ultimately every human being, as God Himself come in that form. They should, of course, start with the Guru and then expand their vision to the entire universe. This practice can go on successfully only if they very intensely maintain their *Sadhana*. While

staying too close to the Guru, if the *Sadhana* is not continued as intensely as before, sometimes the mind falls down to lower levels. Forgetting for the moment that Guru is God Himself and that the *Sadhaka* has no right to question, the *Sadhaka* starts finding fault with the actions of the Guru. The Guru, once or twice, might ignore this lapse, but one should not forget that it makes the *Sadhaka* gradually slip down. He will become conscious of it only when he has slipped down too far and he has to struggle a lot to regain his previous position. The Guru may be concerned with the *Sadhaka* slipping down. But, he may not immediately take any action to lift him up.

30. Custom in olden days

In olden days, the elders used to say that if one takes initiation from a saint and accepts him as his Guru, he should not live any longer with him. He may go once in a while to meet him and pay his respects but never stay with him. It is very difficult to continuously see divinity in a person and, if divinity is not seen in the Guru, there are chances of the *Sadhaka* slipping down.

31. Ego daily crushed by the Guru

We discussed the reasons why *Sadhakas* are advised not to stay close to the Guru for

too long. Now, there are many advantages in staying with the Guru permanently. Staying with the Guru is very difficult. It is like being ground between two stones of a grinding stone because our ego will be crushed every minute and we will not be feeling very happy about it. Every time when the ego gets a knock, we feel very very bitter. We may even think why we should continue the *Sadhana* or why we should continue to remain with the Guru and all that. But, by maintaining the *Sadhana* properly, as intensely as before, and continuing to see divinity in the Guru, we will be able to get our ego finally crushed and reach our goal by his Grace.

When we are with the Guru, we must try our best to put down the ego ourselves. We must be humble not only before the Guru but before every one who comes before the Guru. This sort of humility must be there and that will be definitely appreciated by the Guru.

32. Long stay — attachment to the Guru's form

There is another danger in getting attached to the physical form of the Guru, forgetting his higher aspect. That is also not good, though it is not so bad as finding fault and all that. Even clinging to the form delays realisation. That was why Mataji was asked

at a stage not to do any service to Papa, not to stay in the Ashram and not to even speak to him, during her *Sadhana* period. That was done because Papa felt that she was getting attached to his personal form, which was an obstruction on the path.

So, it means that *Sadhaka* staying with the Guru should not take things easy. He must continue his *Sadhana* as intensely as he was doing earlier. Then only he can get the maximum benefit of the company of the Guru. To remain with the Guru or be away, the choice is God's. By God's Will alone is our life moulded.

33. Long stay — advantages

There are so many chances for the *Sadhaka* to slip down. The presence of the Guru, who corrects the faults in time, proves to be of immense benefit. So, we can say, that will be the happiest part of the life of the *Sadhaka*. Though the pain of getting the ego crushed is severe, if we allow our ego to be crushed like that willingly, we can feel that we are very happy in the company of the Guru.

The other advantage is of constant *Satsang*, which is an extremely rare opportunity in the world. Though many people try, they are denied even a *Darshan* of a saint, in their life. So, it is a great blessing to have, first,

Darshan of a saint and, then, the chance to remain with him, serving him, etc. While living with him, hear nothing but God's name, God's glory and talk only about God.

34. Receptivity — a stage of progress

Even when we are living with saints we can open ourselves to receive their grace only to the extent we have progressed. We have to pass through certain situations and gradually prepare ourselves physically and mentally for higher experiences. The bud takes its own time to blossom into a flower. Forcing it, will only spoil the beauty of the flower. Ultimately it is He who is, by our so-called '*Sadhana*', removing the mask of ignorance put on by Himself. When the process is complete and the instrument is made fully pure and prepared, He will declare "I am He". Now the little 'I' that was claiming doership so far has disappeared. He alone 'is'.

35. Guru is only one

Guru is only one, but he has different forms. When you accept a Guru, you are actually accepting God as your Guru. God is only One. He assumes different forms in different places to teach different people. Mataji maintained this as the highest form of devotion. From the beginning to the end, she was maintaining the

same devotion to the Guru.

36. Taking another Guru, after initiation

This happens sometimes. It happened here in the Ashram. Papa once got a letter from a devotee saying that he had received initiation from a *Mahatma*, twelve years earlier, and that he had not derived any benefit from it. He had heard of Papa and wanted to have initiation from Papa, and he asked in his letter if he could come and take initiation from Papa. Papa wrote back: "If you have taken *Mantra* from a Guru and if you have chanted that *Mantra* as you should have, there would have been no need to ask Ramdas for initiation. Even if Ramdas gives you initiation, you will not progress if you don't chant the *Mantra* properly. So, there is absolutely no meaning in thinking of going to some other saint for initiation. You should properly chant the *Mantra* given by your Guru and you will get the benefit."

37. Surrender — easy to say

Many people used to come to Papa and Mataji and say: "Oh, Papa! Oh, Mataji! I surrender myself completely at your feet." Then Papa would simply smile, but Mataji would look at them and ask, "What do you mean by surrender?" Really they have no idea what surrender means. By prostrating at one's

feet, we don't gain the state of surrender, though by doing so we are meaning that. Real surrender needs constant remembrance of God. We must be able to see God's hand in every incident in this physical world, God's unseen power alone is working. Unless and until we maintain this consciousness, how can we say we have an attitude of surrender? Without having that feeling, how can we say that whatever happens, happens by God's will?

38. God's Grace flows through the Guru

We can do *Sadhana* only by Guru's grace. When Guru's grace falls on us, we are awakened to the Reality and then the *Sadhana* begins. In fact God reveals Himself in that heart which He chooses.

39. God-remembrance possible for householders

The condition for God-realisation is intense aspiration to realise Him and His constant remembrance. Only those who are fired with such an intense aspiration can chant God's Name constantly and maintain ceaseless remembrance. All the saints who have realised God had done such intense *Sadhana*. Some of them were householders. Even as householders, they could devote all their time for God-remembrance and thus

showed the world that even for householders it was possible to remember God constantly.

40. *Mahatmas* may give only a glimpse of God-realisation

Coming in contact with saints gives us an awakening and an impetus to our *Sadhana*. They do not suddenly or miraculously transform a *Sadhaka* as, they say, it is not advisable, though it may be rarely possible. Once when Beloved Papa was asked why he should not use his powers to give Realisation to all who approach him, he smilingly replied that if it was possible, he would have transformed the entire humanity by giving Realisation to one and all. This means the *Sadhaka* has to pass through the course of *Sadhana*, which is very difficult in some cases and not so in some other cases — according to the purity of mind attained by them.

Beloved Papa used to say that even if a saint gives some high experience by his touch to a *Sadhaka*, the experience may not last long. It will give the *Sadhaka* only a glimpse of the Reality and he will have to struggle hard to get established in it. So, nothing can be had unless we pay the full price for it. From this it is clear that Realisation is not a thing to be given by one to another.

41. Prepared aspirants alone may get experiences

At the same time, we hear of instances where certain aspirants got some experiences when they came into contact with certain *Mahatmas* — like Swami Vivekananda experiencing *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* when Sri Ramakrishna touched him. This cannot, however, be a general rule. It should not be forgotten that Sri Ramakrishna gave this experience to none but Swami Vivekananda. He needed a Swami Vivekananda who alone could receive this experience. This shows that the aspirant should be fully prepared to receive the experience from a *Mahatma*.

Beloved Papa used to say that saints are like fire and only aspirants who have become dry twigs can catch fire when they come into contact with a *Mahatma*. A piece of wet wood or a green plantain stalk will not catch fire even when placed on the fire for a long time. This clearly shows that, what is important is the inner preparation of the aspirant to receive the higher experiences.

42. Contact of saints does not go in vain

One thing is certain. The contact of saints does not go in vain. First it awakens us to the Reality, then it gives us an impetus to our *Sadhana*, which may take a short or long

time, depending on the kind of purification required of us. Sometimes the results are quick and at other times there is delay. In any case, there is no need for frustration. Once we are in the clasp of a saint, he is sure to lead us on the path until we reach the goal. Never give yourself to moods of depression or frustration. Be courageous, feeling that our Guru — Beloved Papa — is ever with us, protecting us and guiding us to the ultimate goal.

43. Experience God in Saints' presence

God cannot be proved in a laboratory, but earnest seekers can experience the presence of God if they go and sit before a saint in all humility. In the presence of the saint, they will be able to enjoy peace and bliss of the Eternal even though for a short time.

44. *Jnani* has all qualities

Pujya Mataji's answer is that a *Jnani* has realised his oneness with God in both the manifest and unmanifest aspects. In God everything is good. Only, we label certain things as 'good' or as 'bad'. During the *Sadhana* period, we are asked to eschew the so-called bad things and accept only the good things. But, after realisation, the *Jnani* has every quality in him though he does not use the bad

things against anybody. In fact, even the so-called bad qualities or bad *Vasanas* of a *Jnani* will not have their evil effects on others.

45. Papa's 'righteous indignation'

Pujya Mataji was happy when she saw Beloved Papa once getting angry. The quality of anger was in him but it had no ill effect on him or on others. Beloved Papa himself used to explain this as righteous indignation — anger expressed for the benefit of others. In fact, all these so-called bad qualities manifested by saints at some time or the other are only like a line drawn on a sheet of water, which is seen but disappears immediately.

46. One cannot know saints by books

When we read about saints or go to meet them, we entertain many pre-conceived notions gathered from books or from people who have read about or seen some saints. It is only when we actually live with the saints that we come to realise that most of the ideas that we had previously entertained were not correct. What is written in books is only one aspect. Devotees who write books do not disclose everything, feeling that it is not necessary for others to know them. This gives rise to wrong ideas to the readers. Whatever way they behave, saints are saints. They have

realised the Truth; therefore they are free and in that way, they are different from others.

47. Swamiji's *Sadhana* in the Ashram

I was for a contemplative life before. If I tried to spend my time in the Ashram in silent meditation, there was no use of my staying here, except for my own benefit. So, when God brought me to the Ashram to spend my time in the service of Beloved Papa and Mataji, I had to change my outlook.

I understood that if I remained in the Ashram, it would mean utilising most of my time in the service of Papa, Mataji and all those who are visiting the Ashram, which meant I had to be in tune with God all the time and do service. So I adopted the *Sadhana* of chanting the Name as much as possible during the day and at the same time doing the service whatever was necessary, looking upon it as the service to Beloved Papa himself. That way I did not feel the need to sit and meditate long. Papa did not mean that devotees should always sit and meditate. What he meant was they should keep their mind fixed at the feet of God constantly, by chanting *Ram Nam* or using any other method for that purpose.

Secondly, I could commune with God better while moving about — as, by sitting too long I felt sleepy — and keeping my mind at

the feet of God, which helped me a lot to carry on with the work and at the same time maintaining the remembrance.

48. On the inner struggle of Swamiji

From my school days, I had a feeling that I did not belong to the family and I was like a stranger in the house. I do not know how others felt about it. The question: "Why this life and what is the purpose of this life?" was haunting me constantly and I was trying to find an answer. I did not like to ask anybody this question, as I did not think anybody would answer it. I did not find life worth living. There were occasions when I tried to end my life but did not succeed. Thus years passed. Yet I could not get the answer to the question. I did not like the way people lived — loving only their dear ones, unconcerned with those who are not related to them, inimical to some, hating some, exploiting others for one's own benefit, etc. Though I did not like such things I had no idea of anything better.

49. Awakening during army life

It was in such a desperate condition that I joined the Army service which strangely gave me a lot of experience within a short time — to study the nature of people, how cruel man can be etc. During Army life I had a general

awakening and I came to understand that one can get peace — everlasting peace — only if one gets God-realisation and that the more we think of God, the more peaceful our life will be.

Certain experiences then taught me that man is controlled by God's Will and that all external events that change the pattern of his life, happen only according to God's Will. Certain incidents categorically proved that God constantly protected me, and, from then on, my aspiration was to live for God only and not to work for money, name or fame. I desired to get out of the Army and lead a completely spiritual life, taking God's Name all the time. But, things did not work out the way I wanted. They worked only the way God willed!

50. Papa inducing Swamiji to take *Sannyas*

In course of time God brought me to the Ashram here. When I came here, I felt I had come 'home' — my real home. The feeling that I was a stranger was gone. I engaged myself in the service of Beloved Papa and Mataji. After a year, I expressed to Beloved Papa that while I liked to serve Papa and Mataji, I did not feel happy with the various other activities in the Ashram and craved for a life of contemplation and meditation. I was not for *Sannyas*. I did not appreciate the *Sannyas* life even when I came to the Ashram. But when I felt the need

for solitude and asked Papa what I should do, He said, "Go to Rishikesh, take *Sannyas* and stay in a *Kutiya* doing *Sadhana*". Papa then gave me a set of ochre robes and name and directed me to go to Rishikesh and adopt *Sannyas* there. From this you will understand that I did not crave for *Sannyas* but Beloved Papa asked me to take *Sannyas*. He may have his own reasons for this.

51. "External" *Sannyas* protects the *Sadhaka*

Though I was surprised when told to take *Sannyas*, because Papa told me, I immediately accepted. Later it was found really necessary because *Sannyas* is something binding. Once you have taken to the order of *Sannyas*, you have to maintain a sort of discipline and a way of life, strict life, to respect the order of *Sannyas*. Without *Sannyas* a *Sadhaka* may easily do something wrong and fall is more likely in the ordinary worldly life.

Even though one may be trying to maintain an inner sort of renunciation and all that, a time may come when he is dragged down so much by the pulls of the world that he may succumb to them. I am not putting it as a general rule. But in my case it so happened, *Sannyas* has protected me from many things. So I felt Papa blessed me by asking me to adopt *Sannyas*. After about eight

months' stay at Rishikesh, Papa called me back to the Ashram.

52. Swamiji's accepting the world as a family

To say that I neglected my parents is not correct as my life was in the hands of God and He was directing me. Father was not depending on me and I knew that everybody was taken care of by God only. To say that a *Sannyasi* renounces or sacrifices his home, properties, relatives etc, is also not right. I have not renounced anything. Till I came to the Ashram, I was identifying myself with a small family, say, I was moving in a narrow circle. But after coming here, I started feeling that I belong to the entire world, of which the old family was a part. So it is not renunciation of a family but acceptance of all families — the whole world — as mine.

53. Ram Nam chanting during Meditation

The purpose of chanting the Mantra is to make the mind free from all other thoughts. By constant practice, this is possible. Ultimately, the mind will be free from even the God-thought and become still. One can judge one's progress by the kind of thoughts one gets and the frequency of such thoughts and the peace one is able to maintain.

So, when you are concentrating on the

Ajna centre, the chanting of *Ram Nam* may stop by itself as the mind becomes still. After a little while, if the mind loses its stillness, you can chant *Ram Nam* again. This process may go on until the stillness is maintained for longer and longer periods.

54. Get over the feeling of unwantedness.

In the present scheme of things, it has become the practice that all major members in a family go for work and they hardly get any spare time to spend with others. We may then feel that we are not wanted there. In such situations if we take the initiative and talk to them and do lovingly what little we can and adjust our conduct in such a way as to yield joy to all, we will get over the feeling of unwantedness. In spite of whatever others do, feel that you want them and love them more. Side by side *Ram Nam* chanting with full faith should also go on with a prayer to Beloved Papa to see the 'Papa' factor in everybody. Beloved Papa in one of the writings has mentioned: "To possess a heart full of love, and then to live a life selfless, free and cheerful, is the goal of all lives."

We have to take the world as it is, because it is not in our power to change it as we like, but it is ours to live in it by effecting a change in our vision and in our attitude towards it.

55. Constant *Ram Nam* chanting needs no *Japa Mala*

This is actually a very minor thing in our *Sadhana*. Beloved Papa mentioned that he never liked the use of *Japa Mala* for certain reasons and also mentioned, at the same time, the advantages of using it. That did not mean that nobody should use the *Mala*. As far as Papa was concerned, he did not like the use of it and, so, if anybody asked him, he would say that it was not necessary to use the *Japa Mala*. But, Papa was so broad-minded that he would never condemn any practice, ritual or anything done by the *Sadhaka*. He would say everything had its place in *Sadhana*, in the spiritual life, and nothing was to be condemned, so also the use of the *Japa Mala*. The purpose of using the *Japa Mala* by the *Sadhaka* is only to keep count. As Papa's ideal was that *Ram Nam* was to be chanted all the twenty-four hours, there was no need to keep any count of it. He felt that telling the beads and saying 'I have done 50,000 *Japa* today, I have done 1,00,000' etc. only bloated the ego. He exhorted everyone to chant the Name all the twenty-four hours.

56. Use the *Mala*, if helpful

In Mataji's case, in the early days, she was using the *Japa Mala* but Papa asked her to

stop it. Papa was very strict with her. So, it is left to each individual to decide whether the use of the *Japa Mala* helps him or not. If it is helpful, by all means, use it; if not, stop using it. In the spiritual life, every practice is like our going up the spiritual ladder, rung by rung. We have to go up all the rungs, if we are to get to the top. Papa used to say: “Always aim at the highest. Aim at God-realisation. Nothing else matters. Don’t worry about the *Mala*.”

When somebody asked about using the *Yoga-danda*, Papa said: “You must do without such props. The body and mind are themselves ‘*Upadhis*’ limiting the Infinite. Try to be as free as possible.”

57. Bring out the best while working

You should not forget that we have the right only to work properly, remembering God. The results are in His hands. This does not mean you should be indifferent while working. When you remember God and do the work as dedication to Him, you will naturally put your heart and soul into the work and do it perfectly. Do not worry about the result at all. This practice will gradually free you from all tension and keep you happy and peaceful.

58. Attitude while engaged in an institution

It is not important in which institution

we are working and what type of work we are doing. What is really important is the attitude with which we do the work. Every action of ours should be done as perfect dedication to Him. If this is done it does not matter where we are.

You have dedicated your life for the service of the Lord and as such you are safe in His hands. He will be guiding you from within. Having had the experience with an institution, you must have understood that it is better not to get attached to any institution if one wants to progress fast on the spiritual path.

59. Synchronising tongue and mind

Pujya Mataji's triple method of *Sadhana* is *NAMA*, *DHYANA* and *SEVA*. Have *Ram Nam* chanted by the tongue constantly. When this goes on, the mind has also to be kept busy. The mind should contemplate on Papa: "Papa, Thou art everything, Thou art beyond everything, Thou art the absolute all-pervading Existence and Thou art seated in my heart. Thou should reveal Thyself in my heart." For some time, this must go on side by side with *Ram Nam*. Then, even when *Ram Nam* stops, this contemplation will go on. Whenever Mataji had any work to do, immediately the thought would come into her mind side by side with

the *Ram Nam* chanting: “This work is also Papa’s.” If she touched any article, she would immediately feel: “This article is also Papa’s”.

60. Tongue, mind and hands — one with Papa

With the tongue, with the mind and with the hands, Mataji was in constant communion with Papa and that was meditation in itself. There was no need for any other form of meditation like closing the eyes and forgetting the body, etc. Mataji regarded everything as Papa and tried to be in communion with Papa constantly by following the three methods. She found this technique the simplest but, it was, of course, a very difficult one.

61. Eyes seeing Papa everywhere

In the beginning, Mataji could not synthesize all the three practices but, as she went on with her practice, it became possible for her. Even while working in the kitchen, her mind would be busy contemplating on Him. If she took up any vessel in hand, she would tell herself: “Papa, this is your form” or, if she took up any vegetable for cooking, she would say, “Papa, this is also your form.” By following this way of bringing Papa into her mind besides chanting *Ram Nam*, she reached the spiritual heights very soon.

62. Hands doing all work for Papa

Mataji was telling everybody, “You do not have to give up your occupation. You do not have to change your place. You do not have to give up your family and friends or property and run away to the Himalayas. You can stay where you are; only chant *Ram Nam* and treat whatever work you do as *Guru Seva*.” How is one to do *Guru Seva*? Feel that you are serving the Guru alone in all forms and the strength for it comes from the Guru. If this attitude is steadily maintained in regard to everything one does or says, gradually, the ego-sense will get erased. Then the Guru reveals Himself in your heart. Till then, the practice of seeing the Guru in all forms is a mental practice; this by itself gives you great joy. After a time it becomes an experience.

63. Women’s true role — at home

Mataji feels that when both husband and wife in a house go to work, leaving the children in the hands of an ‘*ayah*’ the parental love will be lost to the children and they might go astray. For this reason she advocates that the role of women is at home.

64. Women’s housework dedicated to God

It is not absolutely necessary to resort to external renunciation. All are advised to

remain at home and perform their activities with an attitude of surrender by maintaining constant remembrance of God, thus bringing about inner renunciation. In the case of women, it is very easy to practise their *Sadhana* at home. While doing work in the kitchen, while serving the children and also while doing all the household work, they can keep chanting the Name and look upon them as different forms of Beloved Papa. So, their spiritual practices can go on simultaneously with their work at home. Whatever work they do can be dedicated to God and that would become their *Sadhana*.

65. Internal Sannyas

Really, there is no need for external *Sannyas*. Internal *Sannyas* is necessary. Internal *Sannyas* means an attitude of renunciation of the sense of 'I' and 'mine' from our mind. Perhaps, external renunciation was necessary in olden days but now-a-days avenues for distraction of the mind of the renunciate are more while wandering here and there and begging for food and all that. It would therefore be preferable to stay at home and do *Sadhana*, and by doing *Sadhana*, renounce the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. That would be real *Sannyas*.

66. Meaning of the ochre robe

Ochre cloth is worn mainly by Hindu *Sannyasis*. It symbolises the fire of renunciation. All our *Vasanas*, all our desires, are to burn in this fire. It is also to remind us constantly of our dedicated life of renunciation.

67. Devotion to God

The cause for disharmony stems from the feeling of 'otherness'. This nature has to be changed. We must have something common amongst ourselves. That common factor is God. If everyone in the family is devoted to God, such troubles and problems will be much less. The husband and wife must be devoted. They must teach their children also to be devoted. All the relations coming there should be devoted. Then chances of such differences will be much less.

68. Mutual love, giving up of ego sense

There must be mutual love and regard and also respect for one another. It means, a lot of give and take must be there. For this we must be prepared to humble down ourselves before others. We must not assert our individuality. For the sake of harmony in the family, we must be able to sacrifice a little. Sacrifice our ego-sense to some extent. That means, where there is a conflict, humble

down; give up your authority or assertion and try to accept the other party's viewpoint and try to solve the problem.

If you go on asserting every time, the other party will be naturally very much humiliated and will maintain a sort of grievance against you. This grievance will go on getting worse and worse and therefore the gap between you and the other party will also become wider and wider.

69. *Sadhana* for realising God

All members in the family should meet together, do *Bhajans*, keep chanting the holy Name of God — whatever Name it is — and make each other understand that we are all here together, in this family, to do *Sadhana* with the aim of realising God and to get the universal vision, which means to give up this small circle of the family and embrace the entire universe. When we are not in a position, even in the family, to have harmony amongst ourselves, how are we going to have a wider vision and universal brotherhood? So, every one must understand this ideal and work towards that ideal. This is possible and there are families who are living such an ideal life, because they have a common aim, that is God-realisation. In dealing with each other, we must forget the minor differences. Everybody

will have a different opinion and we cannot work out all our opinions.

70. Respecting elders

With some respect to our elders, we must be able to sacrifice or give up for the time being, our opinions and accept theirs for the sake of peace and harmony in the house and we should not make fuss over minor mistakes done by others.

71. Mutual understanding and love

We must try to understand others, before we say that such and such person has committed a mistake. It is quite possible that the person has acted in such a way believing it to be right from his/her own stand point which we are not able to accept at that time. If we have the patience to wait for some time and strive to understand or, if we do not do that, by having a quiet talk with that person, most of the problems can easily be solved. Instead of talking, if you keep it in mind, naturally the grievance will get worse, the differences will become more and more and solution will be difficult afterwards.

In short, peace and happiness can be maintained in the household only if there is mutual understanding and a 'give and take' among the members. To have such an

understanding, they should have a common aim and goal. If they are all devoted to God, they will have such an understanding and will be able to love and serve one another, bringing all peace and happiness in the house. It is not mere love based on body-consciousness. It is Divine Love, far above body-consciousness making us understand that all are one in Spirit. So, such an understanding is absolutely necessary before we can expect harmony, peace and happiness in households.

72. Work itself becomes its reward

It is not necessary or possible to give up all activities. What we are asked to do is, not to give up activities but to divinise them by having the right feeling and attitude. That is, when you start doing some work, chant *Ram Nam*, remember God and feel that it is God who is working through you and it is to God you are offering your service. If with this attitude the work is done, it will be a dedicated work. The work itself is its own reward. Whatever may be your past *Karma*, you can try to adopt the right attitude now.

73. Passing exams not the criterion to success in life

Success in life does not merely depend upon passing examinations. Real success lies

in accepting whatever happens as happening by God's will. Knowing this, give up your moods of depression on account of your son's examination results. You have many good things to do. Regain your normal self. Do not belittle yourself or feel that you are unworthy. Go on encouraging your son to do better in his studies and in the next examination.

74. Right behaviour in trying situations

With the holy Name of God on our lips, it should be easy for us to deal with all sorts of people, love them in spite of their faults and weaknesses and live with them peacefully. It is natural with people to retaliate and get themselves estranged from others who might be behaving in peculiar ways and are very demanding. Those who are on the spiritual path should be able to bear all insults and abuses calmly and give them good wishes in return. So, it is not a question of how others behave with us, but how we behave even in the most trying situations, that ultimately matters.

75. Avoid divorce

Kindly see that your daughter and her husband are not separated in a fit of anger. We should not take any decision that may have long-lasting repercussions. Tell your daughter

that divorce is not a solution that will bring peace and happiness. On the other hand, it will only bring complications. Both sides should humble down, ignoring the shortcomings of each other and try to lead a harmonious life.

76. Dealing with an alcoholic parent

Very sorry to hear how unhappy you are because of your father's alcoholic habits. As you are the only one who can tackle or at least talk to him, and get things done, it is definitely advisable for you to stay on where you are and take care of your father and others in the house. This will bring about great relief not only to your father but to the entire family. Feel that Beloved Papa has himself placed you in your present position so that you may take care of your father and mother. Even if you were to go away from the house to escape from the difficult situation, your mind will not be at peace. So, accept things as they are and look after your father and mother with all the love, sympathy and understanding that you can command, and also pray to Beloved Papa seated in their hearts to make them all right.

Beloved Papa will surely listen to your ardent prayers coming as they do from the bottom of your heart, and bring harmony, peace and happiness for the entire family. In the evenings, you may intensify your prayer to the

Lord to make your father abstain from alcohol and thus make the entire household happy and free from tension.

77. God will never let us down

By remembering Him constantly, in all conditions and circumstances, you will experience that He comes to your aid even when you are in the thick of confusion. When everything appears to be dark, you will be able to see a streak of light that will remind you of God's all-pervading Existence and give you the strength to get over the problems. One thing you may be sure of — once we cling to His name, God will never let us down. Give love to others, looking upon them as the forms of God and your heart will overflow with love. Love is the only thing that increases by giving: the more you give, the more you have!

78. Have a detached view

Everyone in the world has some problem or other — some have more, some less. Ours is to face them boldly, by taking a detached view of everything that happens in the world. This will be possible only if we are able to maintain constant remembrance of God, who is all-pervading, absolute Reality, and understand that the entire universe we are living in is His manifestation, which is ever

changing. When we identify ourselves, in a state of ignorance, with the body, we are affected by whatever happens to us or to others connected with our body. Constant remembrance of God will enable us to correctly identify ourselves with our true Being and Existence — *Atman*. If this is done, we can have a detached view of what is going on in the world and can watch all the activities dispassionately.

79. Identify with the *Atman* and surrender

Try to identify yourself with the *Atman* and feel that whatever happens is only on the surface and your real Being is not affected. The outside happenings belong to the play and should be given only so much value and thus view the same dispassionately. This process may be difficult but is possible. Another method is to surrender everything at the feet of the Lord by accepting cheerfully every happening as brought about only by Him and therefore remain undisturbed in all conditions and circumstances.

80. World drama — a projection of God

The world is actually not a creation of God, but a projection, which means God Himself has projected forth as the entire universe as a seed projects itself forth as a huge tree.

Everyone is He and there is nothing but He. The world-drama is going on as directed by the Lord of the universe. So there is no why and whereof on any of the happenings. Ours is to submit to His will through His constant remembrance.

The projection of this world, in the first instance, took place through the imbalance of the three *Gunas* — *Sattwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. *Sattwa* stands for peace, harmony and happiness. *Rajas* is full of activity and also brings about fights. *Tamas* means inertia. When there is any imbalance, say, when *Rajas* is predominant, people will be prone to too much of activity with the result, there will be fights and quarrels.

81. God puts on the mask of ignorance

You may ask, why this *Lila*? Saints say that this is the way the Lord plays the universal game to have some sport. That is how *Bhaktas* look at it. In His *Nirguna*, *Nirvikara*, *Shashwat Swarup*, everything is absolute peace, absolute bliss. He Himself wanted, after remaining in that state for ages, to have some fun and play, for which He had to become many. Thus, He manifested Himself as innumerable human forms, animal forms, insects, plants and numerous other things. They say there are 84 lakhs of beings in the

world. He gave every form a sense of separation from every other form. So, He put on the veil of ignorance Himself and started saying that He was an individual, separate from Truth, separate from others and so on. So many individualities are assumed just for the sake of play.

This is His eternal world-*Lila*. If all of them are of the same type there is no fun in the play just as in dramas, we appreciate only if there are different parts and scenes of comedy and tragedy etc. Naturally if the game were played on smoothly, it would become insipid and monotonous. The world has been compared to a stage where many tragic and comic scenes go on externally. When we see some scenes enacted on the stage, we enjoy them very much, whether they are tragedies or comedies, because we know that it is only a show enacted by trained actors who are not at all affected by the parts they play. Again, as in the drama, though the players apparently show happiness or unhappiness, really they are only acting and are unaffected by the events in the play. In this world-drama, God Himself is the player assuming individuality in each form and is not affected by the play.

82. God removes the mask of ignorance

As long as the individuality persists, one will not be able to think or feel that it is God's

power that works through everybody. On the other hand if we identify ourselves with our true Being and Existence, we can witness the play unaffected by what is happening in the play. When an individual shows signs of dissatisfaction in the worldly attainments and pleasures and aspires to attain the Truth, we can take it that the Lord has chosen to reveal Himself in Him.

And, whenever He wants to end the play in one form, He starts doing *Sadhana* to reveal Himself. He says, 'I am suffering, I am not happy with the world. I want to know the Truth, I want to attain eternal peace and happiness.' He goes to a Guru. The Guru tells him, 'You are Yourself the Truth. You have only put on a veil of ignorance. Just remove the veil and realise you are the Truth!' Then, he asks: 'How to remove the veil?' The Guru replies: 'To remove the veil, meditate on Yourself, as the absolute pure consciousness. Then, gradually the veil of ignorance becomes thinner and thinner, and, finally, it gets removed. Now the erstwhile individual declares, 'I am God, I am the Self'. That is the process. So long as there is the veil of ignorance He Himself has put on, the individual is unaware of the Truth, i.e., his divinity. When Truth is realised, he becomes fully conscious that he and God are one.

83. Witnessing the world-*lila*

If you look at the world with a detached view, you will find that everything has its place and the world is exactly as it should be — tragedies are purely on the surface as enacted in a drama and that all the players are only transitory forms of the Divine seated in their hearts.. The player is He. The witness is also He.

This play should be watched as such, dispassionately. But we forget that this world is also a play. If we identify ourselves with this play we are lost in it and suffer the pains or enjoy the pleasures of the play. All the individuals act, taking the responsibility of doership. When the sense of doership is there, he has to bear the fruits of such actions, which means when he does good actions he has to reap the sweet fruits and bad actions will naturally bring bitter fruits. Thus the cycle of *Karma* goes on

84. Leave the results to God

You are sure to get what you are destined and nobody can take it away from you. Have complete reliance on Beloved Papa, the supreme Lord who is the controller of the universe. Accept every situation as brought about by Him only and have absolutely no ill will towards anybody. You should also love

them positively. This pure love flowing from your heart will gradually bring about a change in their attitude towards you, though it may not be immediate. Of course such change depends upon how pure and unselfish your love is towards them. Love them without expecting anything from them. Be sure that Beloved Papa will provide you with whatever is necessary for you, though it may not be in the way you expect.

You say you have been meeting with failure every time you try to do something. You call it a failure because you are not leaving the results to God. Yours is to try and accept whatever be the results — success or failure. Feel that it is God Himself working through you and whatever the results are, are His only.

You say you are struggling to destroy the ego. The process is not by crushing the ego or fighting it out, but by positively accepting God as the absolute Power. You can go on mentally repeating: “Oh Lord, you are everything. Everything happens by your will alone. This body moves only by your will” etc, etc. This practice will gradually erase the “I”.

85. Attachment turns to pure love

Attachments to persons can be turned into pure love if you train the mind to look

upon those persons as different forms of God. Loving one's own close relations is all right but, in the case of the *Sadhakas*, that love should be transformed to pure love based on seeing God in all of them. There will be no attachment then, even if you move with them closely and remember them often.

86. Value of right involvement

There must be something to frequently remind us of our goal and at the same time to give an impetus to our *Sadhana*. That is *Satsang*. Besides this, we should also engage in such work as will help us in our *Sadhana*. For this, India is definitely a better place than any other. Working in such places, where service is rendered with no strings attached, will immensely benefit those who are not craving for monetary gains and those who are really anxious to progress on the spiritual path.

For God-realisation it is not necessary to go to a particular place at a particular time, as, God is within us. We can realise Him here and now. This is one aspect. The other aspect is that favourable conditions and circumstances available in India cannot be had anywhere else and such favourable conditions will really help a *Sadhaka*. However finally it is God's will that prevails.

87. Difficulties in life — remedies

You must understand that difficulties come to all alike, at some time or the other, but you have to face them by drawing the necessary strength and courage from Beloved Papa within. This is possible if you keep chanting the holy *Ram Nam* more and more and thus remember Beloved Papa and pray to Him.

Do not forget that Beloved Papa is our Saviour. He is with us, within us and everywhere about us. He will continue to protect us in future also. So keep the holy *Ram Nam* always on your lips. Be brave and fully conscious that Beloved Papa is always guiding you and protecting you from within and without, moment to moment. You know fully well that our worries and anxieties are not going to change what Beloved Papa has willed for us. Instead if we, from the bottom of our heart, say, “Thy will be done!” we can always remain happy and cheerful regardless of our external conditions. So, you should never allow yourself to be cowed down by difficulties. Call Beloved Papa, as a child would call its mother. He will surely come to your aid in His own inscrutable way.

88. Sufferings caused by past *Karma*

Saints have said that our happiness or misery depends upon what we had done in this life or in our previous lives and nobody

should be held responsible except ourselves. If we had done good things, we reap good fruits and if we had done bad things, we reap bitter fruits. This is the law of *Karma*. So, those who are enjoying success and prosperity now, may be reaping the fruits of their good actions in their previous lives and, while doing so, if they are doing bad things, they are sowing seeds for suffering in the future.

89. Transferring all burdens unto God

There is no one in the world who is free from troubles and is truly happy, except the one who has learnt the “art” of passing on his troubles, cares and responsibilities to God, who in truth bears the entire burden of the universe. Such a one always remains happy, cheerful and free like children. So, if you also want true happiness and freedom from worries and anxieties, you should lay all your burdens and responsibilities at the lotus feet of the Almighty Lord. The way to commune with Him and to transfer all your responsibilities to Him is to constantly chant His holy and all-powerful Name — whatever Name you like — with all faith and love.

90. Facing adverse situations

There is no use running away from situations. You have to face them bravely,

taking the Divine within as your support and guide. Do not be disheartened. When you feel the outside attack is too much for you to bear, pray to God to bless all those who are responsible for such attacks, with right understanding, peace and happiness. Thus always wish well of others.

91. Evil spirits — powerless

As our Master Beloved Papa has taught, “You should take it that the *Guru Mantra* is all in all. Do not bother about evil spirits. All experiences you have undergone so far are for your own good. Have full trust in God and He will see that you and yours are protected.” The Master also taught that the one and only sovereign remedy for all the ills of life is to take refuge in the holy Name of God — any Name you like. Be fully confident that He is protecting you from all evil forces that are powerless against a devotee of the Lord.

92. Forgiving, or not noticing others’ faults

Others may act childishly, actuated by envy and jealousy, wanting to do harm rather than good. Ours is to maintain our equilibrium. So, you are doing the right thing by forgiving others for their faults. After a time, you will find that there is even no need to forgive, as you may not notice any fault at all. You have

to forgive only when you notice faults. So, when no faults are noticed, what is there to forgive? That is, no doubt, a very high stage, but if you are able to do it, you can be very happy. We have to accept the world as it is, with all its vagaries. That is, after all, a play on the surface. The Lord Himself is playing this wonderful game. Deep within, He is all peace and bliss, unaffected by the external play. If we commune with Him, we can also remain unaffected by the external play.

93. Absence of sense of doership absolves from the effects of action.

When problems are confronted, you may pray to God seated in your heart to give you the right guidance and strength to deal with them and act in the right way. Know that it is He who is activating everything and everybody including you. This will take away the sense of doership from you and absolve you from the effects of your action. It may be difficult in the beginning but by practice it should be possible.

94. Be positive in your approach.

To remain mentally happy and peaceful, you require a lot of adjustment. You have to train your mind to adjust yourself in such a way as not to be affected by the remarks, actions or attitudes of others. It should not

matter to you what others say about you as long as you are fully confident that what you do is right. When others make unfavourable remarks about you or say something unpleasant, instead of getting upset, you should take things sportingly without nursing any ill feeling towards them. You must give them your unstinted love. That will do you good and will also gradually change the attitude of others towards you.

95. Happenings are unchangeable

We should know that we cannot change the happenings in the world but we can change our attitude towards them. When unpleasant things happen, we have only to take it that this is what the entire world can give us, and for real and lasting happiness we have to approach God.

We have to learn by experience that we cannot expect anything better from the world. Take a detached view of everything and remain happy and cheerful in all conditions and circumstances. Beloved Papa used to say that the world is fully safe in the hands of God who is the controller of the universe. We should bother ourselves only about our spiritual progress so that we may attain the right vision. For this we have to intensify our efforts to keep His constant remembrance and leave the rest in His hands.

96. Spiritual aspirants respect *Dharma*

Though India is considered a spiritual country, we have to admit that all persons in the country are not spiritual. Those who are walking on the spiritual path will never resort to unspiritual activities such as crimes and exploitation, fraud, killing, communal conflicts, inter-caste feuds etc. This rule applies not only to India but also to all countries.

97. Divinise all activities

Our main object in life must be to realise the truth of our oneness with God and thereby enjoy eternal happiness. For this purpose intense *Sadhana* is necessary. In the course of *Sadhana* usually we may not be able to spend all the 24 hours in meditation. It may be necessary for us to devote some time or in some case more time in useful service. Useful service means whatever work we do should be done looking upon it as service to God. This is actually divinising all activities. This practice will help our *Sadhana* and hence the activities do not become a hindrance to our *Sadhana* and prayers.

We should not have too many activities. Usually when people take up some activities to supplement their *Sadhana*, the activities grow so fast as to swallow the hours of their meditation etc. finally causing disturbance and

nervous breakdown. If these activities, from the beginning, are taken as *Sadhana* itself and thus get divinised, the problem will not arise at all. So adjust your activities as not to disturb your *Sadhana* and do all your work with perfect dedication to Him. Go slow.

98. Nama Japa Sadhana

Take to the chanting of “*Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*” and try to make the chanting constant. This means 24 hours; of course you have to deduct the hours for sleep etc. Leaving those few hours, you must have the holy *Ram Nam* on your lips and your mind must be contemplating upon God, as the supreme all-pervading existence, as the entire manifested universe and as seated in everybody’s heart. This practice will gradually purify your mind and make it understand the truth that everything in the universe is God Himself and whatever happens is by His will. This will give you perfect peace of mind, though the external conditions may remain the same which you cannot change. So please take to the practice of chanting the holy and all-powerful *Ram Nam* and be sure that God’s protecting hand will be upon you always.

Glad to note that your recent stay in the Ashram benefited you. The very fact that the chanting of God’s Name has appealed to

you shows that you were ready to receive it. Actually one gets such a feeling only when he/she has tuned the inner equipment to receive the vibrations, which comes only after certain degree of purification of the mind.

You have started enjoying the sweetness of the holy name. That is why you want to drown yourself in *Ram Nam*. Keep it up. His Name is simply wonderful in its potency. His Name also serves as the light that illumines the path leading to Him. Call upon Him as you call your mother. Let the purest and deepest feelings of your heart be concentrated in the call. It can purify, elevate and enlighten you thoroughly. Repeat the Name constantly with all faith. Aspire for the highest. Rest assured that when your aspiration is intense, Beloved Papa will guide you and take you to the supreme heights of realisation. As your aspiration becomes more and more intense, craving for the worldly attractions will drop off by itself.

99. Long *Sadhana*, yielding no fruits

In his book *IN THE VISION OF GOD*, Beloved Papa has mentioned that he met a *Sadhu* at Swargashram in Rishikesh. This *Sadhu* complained that although he had been repeating God's Name and doing *Sadhana*, staying in a *Kutia*, for more than thirty years, he had not

attained anything, whereas Papa was bubbling with joy. He asked Papa, how many years he did *Sadhana* to achieve that bliss. When Papa told him that he had been doing *Sadhana* for only two or three years, he was aghast at it. Beloved Papa explained to him that mere chanting of *Ram Nam* will not do. It should be supported by intense aspiration to realise Him.

100. *Ram Nam* serving to fulfil desires

We may have many desires lurking in us and our *Ram Nam* may fulfil those hidden desires but not take us nearer to God. The desires are like rat holes in the field. If you water the field, all the water will go into the rat holes. The crops planted there will not get the required water. Similarly, *Ram Nam* that we are chanting, though ostensibly for God-realisation, is used for fulfilling desires. We may be feeling that we have no desires in life and that we are only for God-realisation but deep down in our heart, we may have so many desires. Unless we love God and aspire for God alone, more intensely than for anything in the world, we cannot achieve real progress. A stage must come when we will cry to God: 'Oh Lord! I want nothing, nothing but You and You alone!' Nothing in the world would satisfy us. Until we get God, we must be like a person oppressed with thirst for water. Until he gets

water, he will not take anything else. Such a thirst for God must be ours.

101. Crave for God

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa gives us the example of a *Shishya* who asks the Guru for immediate realisation. He tells the Guru, "Guru Maharaj! I am aspiring for God. Give me God-realisation. I want Realisation immediately." The Guru takes the disciple to the river and asks him to dip his head in water. When his head is in water, the Guru presses the head down with the result that the *Shishya* cannot raise his head and is getting suffocated. After a while he is released and when the *Shishya* raises his head, the Guru asks him: "How did you feel?" The *Shishya* says: "I was craving for air. I was becoming breathless." The Guru thereupon tells him: "You must have such a strong desire for God, when living in the world. If intense aspiration is there, Realisation is not far off." How to get that intensity is the question. That can come only by our whole-hearted prayer to God. Whenever we do not have that intense aspiration, let us pray to God, let us cry to Him, weep before Him and tell Him: "O Mother! O my Lord! give me such intensity that my mind stays at Your feet always and will not run after worldly things." Intensify this prayer.

That itself will give you concentration of mind and help you to go forward.

102. Barometer to evaluate spiritual progress

If you want to know where you have gone wrong, you will get an answer if you search within yourself, vis-a-vis:

*How far has your mind been purified?

*Is the mind free from all lower desires?

*Is the mind able to keep God-remembrance constantly?

*Are you able to love everybody irrespective of whether he or she is your relation or otherwise?

*Are you able to forgive those who are against you or do harm to you?

*Are you aspiring for God and nothing but God?

Perhaps, these questions may give you an idea as to where you stand and how you should correct yourself so that you may progress on the path fast. Saints' grace is pouring on us constantly and, the more *Sadhana* we do, the more do we become conscious of this fact.

103. State of mind reveals spiritual progress

When you continue your *Sadhana* — chanting His holy Name constantly — contemplate on Him as the Absolute Existence, beyond all names and forms, who has

manifested as the entire universe and as one seated in our heart, and dedicate everything you do as His service. Your heart will be gradually purified and it will be rid of all thoughts, except God-thought. From the state of your mind, you can make out whether you are progressing or not. Later, the God-thought also disappears, making the mind perfectly still, for longer and longer periods. It is in this state of stillness that God reveals Himself. It is said that when such experience comes, one is not conscious of the body and the outside world. The mind having become still and the ego having disappeared, the experience of our oneness with the Eternal Infinite Existence alone remains.

104. Sweetness of *Ram Nam*

The sweetness of *Ram Nam* does not come easily. It comes only after long and intense practice. The nature of the sweetness is such that the mind craves for further enjoyment of the same. So, if *Ram Nam* is chanted for some time, the mind, losing all its restlessness, enters a state of stillness again. Only when one has enjoyed the sweetness of the Name, one will wish to have it again. Till then one has to go by faith in the words of the Guru. By repeated efforts and regular practice, one can enjoy the sweetness

for longer and longer periods until the mind loses itself in the Name.

105. No instant reaction to situations

Incessant chanting of *Ram Nam* gives us constant remembrance of the Divine. With this background, peace and tranquillity is maintained. But, suddenly, something happening outside makes us forget God and we react to the situation very unfavourably — either by getting angry or by becoming depressed. To avoid this, we should try to maintain our equilibrium by practising *not to react to any situation immediately*.

106. Prayer for strength to do work

Whenever you have very heavy and urgent work to be done, before you start the work, pray to Beloved Papa to give you strength to do the work perfectly. With this prayer, keep chanting the holy *Ram Nam* as much as possible. This will take away all tensions and give you the feeling that it is Beloved Papa's power that is working through you. You can be sure that the work will be done perfectly and with care.

107. Chant *Ram Nam* before reacting

When somebody talks to you pleasantly or unpleasantly, before you react to it in the

normal way, chant OM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM or any name of God mentally. This will prepare you to deal with the other person in a loving and kindly way. If you are able to meet every situation like this, you can be sure of a tension-free and anger-free life. Others may think it odd that you are not responding immediately (while you are chanting *Ram Nam*). But all will get used to that in due course. Let us not worry how others react to our ways. What is more important is, how we react to others. Our thoughts and words should be such as to avoid hurting others' feelings.

108. How to become His devotee.

The Lord assures that His devotee is dear to Him. So, we have to become His devotees. You must have read the lives of devotees, how God tenderly looked after them. A devotee should, first and foremost, unconditionally accept everything that happens as willed by God for his good. Thus, he should make his surrender perfect. Perfect surrender to His will results in immediate peace and happiness. If these conditions are fulfilled, you are sure to remain calm in all conditions and circumstances, as you will have then cast the entire responsibility on Him. Merely chanting the Name any number of times a day is not sufficient. It should go on till you achieve

constant remembrance of Him.

You may sometimes find it difficult to concentrate either on the holy *Ram Nam* or on regular work, leading to dejection and depression. The company of saints will help you to get over this condition. If you are not able to get the company of saints, you may chant *Ram Nam* intensely in solitude.

109. Plunge only when aspiration is strong

You are not yet clear as to what you should do about your future. As you admit, though you want Papa, your aspiration is not strong enough. So, it is better that you take up some profession to lead a worldly life until the call from within becomes irresistibly strong. Till then, if you stay in any Ashram, it will be just whiling away your time for which you may have to regret later. The 'instructions' that you seem to be getting from Mataji from within cannot be depended upon. It may be your own little self, speaking from within. So, please do not get carried away by such instructions. It requires a lot of mental purification to hear the 'voice of God' from within.

110. Intensifying Sadhana

Keen aspiration is necessary in one's journey to the Supreme Goal. So, pass through

this with full faith in our Guru — Beloved Papa. Continue your *Sadhana* uninterrupted with all zeal and enthusiasm. With such a fiery aspiration, all your lower *Vasanas* should get burnt off, purifying you through and through. The Guru within alone is to be prayed to for anything that you want to get done. But, time is also an important factor. We cannot hurry up things. We have to clear out the accumulated ‘dirt’ of ages and ages. Till the mind is perfectly cleansed of all impurities, such struggles will have to go on.

111. Higher life comes on realising hollowness of the worldly attainments.

Man thinks that he is able to do everything by himself, by his own power. As long as he is able to do so, he does not need to call for Divine help. But a time comes when he realises the limitations and feels that a higher power alone can help him. Here, his ego tumbles down and he accepts God’s power as supreme. This means that as long as a man is satisfied with what the world gives him, he does not need ‘Vedanta’. But when he understands the futility of running after worldly attainments, he will think of the necessity of searching for something higher.

112. *Purushottama*

Prakriti is the creative energy, the manifest aspect; *Purusha* is the unmanifest aspect. *Purushottama* transcends both *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. It is like two sides of the same coin. One side is *Prakriti*, the other side is *Purusha* and the whole coin is *Purushottama*. *Purushottama* which is beyond the manifest and unmanifest is outside the scope of intellectual comprehension.

113. *Sadhaka* to be understood as spiritual aspirant only

When you are talking about God to others, ensure that they understand you only as a spiritual aspirant walking on the path and that they do not draw any wrong impression about your state of Realisation.

114. Right attitude in social service

The spiritual aspirant must have his thoughts always centred on God. Whatever help you render to others, be aware that it is God who is doing it through you. Whoever comes to you may be given a few loving words and you can always talk to them about God's love, as an instrument of God. An instrument or servant of God is always in communion with Him and practises Universal Love. Also, when you do something to help others, you must look

upon them as different forms of God Himself, maintaining your communion with Him.

115. Miracles

Some saints perform miracles without being conscious of doing so. The power to perform miracles is called *Siddhi*. But Beloved Papa used to warn aspirants against the temptation to perform miracles. In the course of one's *Sadhana*, at one stage, the aspirant acquires some *Siddhis*. These are obstacles on the path to attain Self-realisation. If the aspirants make use of such powers, it will hamper their spiritual progress.

116. God will decide future

You should know that your indifference to studies is not correct. Whatever line you want to pursue, it is absolutely essential that you complete your studies first. God will decide about your future after you complete your studies. Once, a young man went to Swami Vivekananda with some problem. After listening to his problem, Sri Swamiji advised the young man to go back home, complete his studies and, then only, to take to spiritual life. You may keep chanting the holy *Ram Nam* whenever you are not engaged in studies, with a prayer to the Lord seated in your heart to help you concentrate more on your studies. If

you pray in all sincerity and earnestness, the Lord will surely help and guide you on the right path.

117. A detached view

The Lord assures that nothing untoward happens to His devotees. What it means is that *real Bhaktas* will never feel anything as untoward, though to the rest of the world, the events may look as untoward. The question is, who is a real *Bhakta*. Merely chanting *Ram Nam* or any Name of God for a few minutes or hours daily or going to temples and offering worship and *Puja* there, do not qualify a person to be called as *Bhakta*.

The real *Bhakta* is he who has surrendered totally to the will of God through His constant remembrance and therefore accepts everything cheerfully — the so-called good or bad. He sees only the play of Lord in all happenings. He can also, with a detached view, see the play of his past *Karma* and the transitory nature of the world. He fully realises that, when living in this world, one must be prepared for many shocks that one may receive during the life time, as, one has come to this world only to work out the effects of the previous actions and that the world being transitory, nothing is permanent here and everything is constantly changing. He will be

conscious that he has a body but that he is not the body.

118. We make our future

What we should now do is to avoid doing bad *Karmas* but do only good *Karmas* so that our future may be one of happiness. In other words, we have already moulded our “present” and have only the liberty to make the “future”. This only means whatever we are now is because of our previous actions and that our present actions will decide our future. If we know this truth, we will refrain from doing anything bad by thought, word or deed so that we may have a happy and peaceful future. Let us therefore engage ourselves only in such acts as will be beneficial for us and for others and as will be helpful to our spiritual progress.

119. One gets what one is destined

There is a general complaint that some people do not get any appreciation in spite of hard work while some others may not do anything at all, yet they get great appreciation. We cannot explain why such things are happening except to attribute them to our previous *Karma*.

Nobody can deny what one is destined to get. So it will be good if one has the strength and courage to undergo all the ordeals very

patiently without blaming anybody for one's sufferings. Such ordeals will help to really understand what the world is, what one can expect from the world and on whom one should really bank upon.

Then again some people feel others are more fortunate. When you think of success and prosperity of some who have been blessed that way, you must also think of many others who have been less fortunate and have been suffering both physically and financially. Then, you will understand that the Lord has graciously kept you in a better position than those less fortunate ones. Do not compare yourself with anybody whom you think is better off. Instead, wholeheartedly thank the Lord for what you are now and enjoy the peace and bliss of the Eternal by communing with Him as much as possible. Be sure that those of you who are communing with Him constantly will always be taken care of — as a mother takes care of her children, though not the way you want but the way He wills.

120. Everything in the world is transient

The sages and saints tell us that in this transitory world, we cannot expect lasting happiness which we can get only if we cling on to that which is ever-lasting, which is the substratum for this ever-changing universe.

Once we get a glimpse of this ever-lasting existence, which is possible by taking to the chanting of the glorious name of God, we will be able to clearly understand that we cannot depend upon anybody or anything in this world for our happiness. So, take to the chanting of God's name as much as possible, remembering the Lord seated in your heart. This practice will gradually reveal to you the Truth, and you will be able to raise yourself to a higher level of consciousness, which will be free from all sorts of sorrow and grief.

We should also not forget that human beings are born alone, have contact with others for short periods and depart, like the logs of wood carried by the current in a river, which come together for sometime and are separated soon after. Knowing this truth will help us to take a detached view of things and to realise that everything in the world is transient and we get true happiness only by clinging on to the Imperishable.

It is natural that you should miss the physical presence of your husband but, again, you must know that we are not merely these bodies but are the undying *Atman*. So, your husband who has dropped his body, is still very much alive though unseen by your naked eye. The moment you think of him, he is there before you in your mental vision and he is

eternal as every one of us is.

So, raise yourself from the mood of depression and sorrow, know the Truth and regain your cheer. He will surely enlighten you with the light of knowledge and grant you peace and eternal happiness.

121. Ponder over the inevitable

You should not forget that we are living in a world, which is transitory. Nothing is permanent here except the Truth, which we really are.

If ignorant people, who have no idea of Truth and higher life, go on lamenting over perishable things, there is some excuse for their doing so, as it is on account of their ignorance. But, once you have taken to a life of *Sadhana*, you should try to be conscious of what you really are, what the world is and how everything in the world changes from moment to moment. Yet, if you cling on to perishable things, you will only be inviting grief and sorrow. So you must take a detached view of everything.

122. On rebirth

To a comment that the westerners coming to India must have been born previously in India and were therefore attached to India, Papa's answer was that, in their previous birth,

they must have been desiring the western type of life which they could not have in India and, so, to fulfil their desire, God gave them birth in the West. Having enjoyed what they wanted and tired of it, they now were turning to India, their own land.

One thing is true that everyone of us has passed through many births and it is after the experience of many births that we get a desire to realise God. Again, after many more births with this desire growing in us, we finally reach Him.

123. Advice to a girl on marriage

The girl should first of all feel that she is going to a house where she will receive a lot of love and affection. She should also identify herself with the new family and love them wholeheartedly without any reservation, as she has been loving her parents and all at home. She should be able to sacrifice her petty likes and dislikes for the sake of maintaining intact her love towards others and thus bring peace and harmony in the house. Chanting the holy *Ram Nam* as much as possible will help her to get right guidance to do the right thing at the right time.

Her new life also requires a lot of sacrifice for the sake of maintaining solidity of the foundation of love amongst all in the

family. When the foundation of love becomes very strong, the so-called sacrifice will not be felt as sacrifice at all. All her thoughts and actions must be to help and strengthen this love.

124. Papa and Mataji reacting differently

Papa used to only observe the *Sadhaka*, but in the case of Mataji it was not so. Mataji, on noticing any slip, would immediately try to correct the *Sadhaka* and put him on the right path. She, however, found that this way of doing things was not at all bringing favourable results. Then Papa would tell her that she should allow the *Sadhakas* to go their own way until they realized for themselves that they were going on the wrong path and corrected themselves. When the *Sadhakas* realised their mistakes and came to Papa seeking pardon, Papa would be all compassion. He would help them out as much as possible and advise them where they had gone wrong and why they had slipped down.

125. Taking the mind within

Taking the mind within means to see the Truth or to be conscious of the Truth that is the basis or substratum of the forms that are perceived. When you look at any form, do not see merely the form, but be also conscious

of the Truth within that form. As for yourself, do not take it that you are the body but that you are the *Atman*.

126. Distaste for worldly things doesn't result in inefficiency

Some people have the feeling that those who are spiritually inclined are no good, they are inefficient and so on. Actually, it is the other way — that means, they will be more efficient. Their vision becomes wider. But their activities and words are not appreciated by the world because they seem to be unworldly. So, they are labelled as useless. Really, when they have attained the Goal, they are more efficient as all their activities are egoless though, during their *Sadhana* period, they may not show interest in the things of the world.

127. *Vairagya* due to domestic problems

Ashram life is not the place for those who get dejected just because of certain happenings in the family, causing some *Vairagya*. This *Vairagya* is momentary and cannot be depended upon. If you are really after a spiritual life, you would not get so seriously affected when your relatives leave you. Whenever worldly hits and knocks affect you seriously, you may of course go and stay in an Ashram for a few days to regain your

normal self. If it is your mistake that has brought about your separation from the family, try to apologize to your family. If it is their mistake, you may lovingly explain to them and make them understand that by living separately both are likely to be unhappy and, therefore, both may forget and forgive and live together harmoniously.

128. Practising prayers silently

It is better if prayers are done silently and nobody knows about them. Some may appreciate it, and at the same time, many may laugh at it. When they laugh at it, you may be affected. So, let nobody know anything about your views on God or about your spiritual practices. Whatever opinions others may hold, you must be firm in the faith that prayers are absolutely necessary for a happy and peaceful life, here and hereafter. You have that faith. So, don't be carried away by what others say.

129. God-remembrance

By practising to remember Him constantly, in all conditions and circumstances, you will be able to experience His presence even when you are in a state of confusion. When everything appears to be dark, you will be able to see a streak of light, which will remind you of *Ram's* all-pervading

Existence and give you the strength to get over the problems. One thing is sure, if we cling on to His Name, He will never let us down.

130. *Sadhana* in critical situations

You say that your life at home is completely overwhelming you and that your studies and the few friends you have, take up all your time and energy leaving you in utter despair and panic. You should not forget that at some time or the other, everyone has to face similar situations in his or her life. We can face them bravely only by drawing the necessary strength and courage from Him who is seated in our heart, who is pervading everywhere and who is the controller of the universe. So, do not give up, do not be depressed, do not allow yourself to be cowed down by frightening situations.

Intense prayer will surely be responded to, and you will be able to get the needed strength and courage to deal with the situation at home lovingly and affectionately, so that all in the house will receive your love and care, which will prove a healing balm for them.

Cheer up and be ever brave. It is not our external conditions that are responsible for our misery and happiness, but our own state of mind that must always be independent of them. This can be done, only by making the

mind dwell ever upon God, who determines all our affairs for our good only. Keep His all-powerful Name always on your tongue and in your thoughts. Then, cares, worries and doubts dare not approach you.

131. One type of *Sadhana* only

You seem to be practising different types of meditation — on the form of your *Ishta*, on the sound of *Ram Nam* and on the enquiry 'who am I', at one and the same time. Beloved Papa was concentrating on the sound of the Name that he was chanting and that gave him concentration. Puja Mataji was not meditating at all, until the last stage, but she was always chanting *Ram Nam*, bringing to her mind that she was chanting the Name of Beloved Papa who is eternal, infinite, beyond all names and forms and who has taken the form of the entire universe and is seated in her heart and everyone's heart. That itself was meditation though not in a sitting posture. Take any method suitable to you but stick to one type.

132. Disharmony in Ashram — remedy

Ashrams are supposed to be the source of inspiration for the householders who crave for peace and happiness in the work-a-day world as also for seekers seeking spiritual progress. If the inmates and the responsible

persons in the Ashram do not practise the principles they preach, what can the poor lay man learn? Not only he cannot learn but he also loses whatever faith he has in spiritual life. He may feel that householders are better than those in Ashrams and Mutts. If we create such a feeling in the minds of the householders, we are doing a great disservice to them for which we cannot be excused.

133. Settle differences smoothly

Great saints have established Ashrams and Mutts for the benefit of the present and future generations to help them to walk on the path of *Dharma*, lead a life of love and service and ultimately to reach the supreme goal they themselves have reached. They had to leave the management of such institutions in the hands of their trusted disciples/followers who, they hoped, would follow the path of *Dharma* and the guidelines set by the Master. It is natural and possible that among the disciples/followers there may arise differences of opinion in regard to the management. Such differences should be discussed and settled lovingly and smoothly and should not be allowed to develop so far as to create serious situations.

In settling such differences, everyone concerned has to observe some restraint and

must be able to sacrifice his views, notions, position, status and everything in the larger interest of the welfare of the institution so that the sanctity, purity, harmony and, above all, love may be maintained intact and the aims and ideals of the institution are not lost.

134. Serve the Guru

Everyone in the institution has to remember that his main responsibility is to think, speak, and act in consonance with the ideals placed by the Guru and thus serve the Guru. This will benefit him in his *Sadhana* and also all others who come in contact with him by their experiencing peace and happiness for which they are visiting the institution. Any lapse on our part will seriously affect us in our *Sadhana* and also fail to give peace and happiness to others and thus go against the very purpose of the institution.

135. Become a model for others

The devotees who come to the institution do so to gain some peace and happiness and to learn the way to maintain it always, to love and serve others thereby expanding their vision until they are able to embrace the entire universe as their own. They draw the necessary inspiration from the talks and actions of the head of the institution as

well as the inmates. So it is the responsibility of each and every member of a spiritual institution to be in every way perfect so as to set an example to others. If those who are managing the show, have acute differences among themselves and resort to the Court of Justice or take law into their own hands and try to settle matters by fight, what can a lay man learn from them? By not following the dictates of our Guru, we are not only doing disservice to ourselves but to others as well.

136. *Mantra* initiation

Name means Name of God. God has innumerable names. The saints give certain combinations of names, which are called *Mantras*, to disciples through initiation. These Names/*Mantras* can be chanted without initiation also, but they will have better effect if initiated by a saint. The Name has the power to purify our mind and take us to the supreme heights of realisation if we chant it with love and devotion, aspiring only for God. If one chants the Name without being initiated, God will see to it that he is brought in contact with a saint and gets initiated.

137. Miracles happen by God's Will

Miracles do not happen when we expect them to happen. Many cases of miracles have

happened when least expected. Nobody can say what are the conditions to be fulfilled to bring about a miracle. It is purely God's will.

138. To recognize a realized soul

As *Sadhakas*, we are not supposed to judge the attainments of saints. We have only to see them as manifestation of God and love and respect them as such. If and when God wills that a *Sadhaka* should come in contact with such a great soul who is in a state of *Sahaja Samadhi*, He will surely bring about such a contact. When he sits before such an august personality he will feel an unearthly peace descending on him. That is how we recognize a realized soul.

139. Searching for God without/within

It is the nature of the mind to make us extrovert. After searching for God outside everywhere, we are ultimately directed by the Guru to turn the mind within and see the Divine there. But in the initial stages, the search for Him outside also seems to be natural and necessary as it proves to be a part of the purificatory process.

140. Difficulties in understanding Saints

As Beloved Papa mentioned many times, it is very difficult to understand saints from

what they talk or do. We must know them only from what they are. Only God can know them.

Beloved Papa also used to say that even saints cannot understand saints because from their level of consciousness they see everybody only as different forms of God. They do not give importance to the play on the surface as saint or sinner.

Ordinary persons cannot gauge saints because they have not risen to that level of consciousness from where they can clearly understand. So, the safest thing for them will be to accept whatever saints say or do as correct.

141. *Sadhana* removes dirt from mind

It is not possible with our gross mind to understand the mysteries of life. The mind has to be made purer and purer and therefore more and more subtle by proper *Sadhana*. Only then subtle things happening in life can be grasped. Then the experience comes and you realise your true being and existence. This realisation solves all problems.

We should not forget that we have been accumulating dirt in our mind by way of *Vasanas*, *Karmas*, thoughts, desires etc. and that by *Sadhana* alone all these layers of dirt have to be gradually washed off. In that process when we engage ourselves in daily activities,

we also add to the dirt. So the process of cleaning goes on slowly. Some blessed souls, like Beloved Papa, Mataji and Ramana Maharshi, who took birth with almost a clean slate, found immediate results in their *Sadhana*, but many others have to struggle for years to complete the process of purification

142. Perfect purification of the mind is a 'must'

We should try to accept the truth that whatever experiences we have, good or bad, are all given by Him for our own spiritual progress. Perfect purification of the mind is a 'must' for which such experiences are necessary. It is just like burnishing an object by rubbing and scrubbing. This process may be painful but is necessary in certain cases. Never should one get dispirited. It is God who is giving these experiences and so, they are to be accepted cheerfully. With such a positive attitude, one will be able to take things lightly without any complaint whatsoever.

143. Mind-purification by God-remembrance

There are innumerable *Pujas* to invoke different deities for getting material gains. Such *Sakama Pujas* will only force us to continue in the cycle of birth and death as, by one wish getting fulfilled, we will be desiring

more and more and it will go on *ad infinitum*. So, do not get into the tangle of such prayers and *Pujas*. We should go beyond all these and take only to the chanting of *Ram Nam* to maintain His constant remembrance. This is the way to purify the mind. Purification of the mind is not that easy.

You have to do *Sadhana* for a long time. You cannot expect results in a day or two. The more you chant the name, the more peace you will get and the purer your mind will become. When the mind gets more and more purified, you will be able to understand the Truth, detach yourself from everything that is perishable, and attach yourself to the Imperishable.

144. Process of mind-purification

We note that though everybody in the house loves you and are good to you, you are, by your words and actions, hurting their feelings without your being conscious of it. Do not find fault with anybody for anything done to you. God does Himself, whatever is done, through that person, for your purification. Have absolutely no ill will towards anybody. If there is any ill will, remove it by mentally prostrating before that person and asking forgiveness from him. This way make your own mind pure, thus making others happy and creating a

harmonious and loving atmosphere in the house.

145. Destroy ego-sense, not body

The thought of suicide should not come to your mind. There is no benefit in destroying the body. What is to be destroyed is your ego-sense. For that, chanting God's name is the way.

146. Mind-control by *Nama Japa*

By chanting *Ram Nam* constantly with all love and devotion, the mind can be brought under control. While chanting, keep the mind contemplating on God as the all pervading Reality, as the entire manifestation and as seated in everybody's heart.

After a few minutes' chanting, you can address God: "Oh Lord. You are the Absolute, all-pervading Existence, You have manifested as the entire universe i.e. every form in the universe is Yours, and You are seated in my heart. Please reveal Yourself in my heart". Again go on chanting the *Mantra*, often remembering this prayer.

As Beloved Papa used to say "The more we love God, the better will be our concentration." Ultimately our love for God should be absolute i.e. we should love God more than we love anything in the world. To get such love, again prayer to Him is the only way.

147. Reality/unreality of the body

Some saints have said that this world and all that we see around us have no existence but are a mere projection of the one Supreme Power or *Brahman*. On the other hand this body of ours, which is made up of five elements, is tangible and we feel its existence. Some others have said that the Soul, which motivates or actuates this body, is the Supreme Power or *Brahman*. When the soul leaves the body, the body disintegrates or resolves into its elements. It is also said that some saints have seen God, talked to Him and some have even left the world for heavens in their human body. This is an apparent contradiction.

Jnanis take it that the world really does not exist, but appears to exist because of our mind. If the mind does not exist, the world also does not exist, as in deep sleep. The Self alone is Real. *Bhaktas* consider the world as the manifestation of God. It is ever changing, unlike its substratum, the Self or *Atman* which is static.

The waking state in which the world is seen as existing is as real or as unreal as the dream state in which also the mind projects forth as innumerable forms. It is the Supreme Power alone that activates the body by putting on a mask of ignorance causing the sense of

individuality. *Bhaktas*, by meditating on or being devoted to particular form of God, can make Him manifest in those forms, which may be called their mental projections. They see and talk to those forms.

When the soul leaves the body, the body that is made up of five elements disintegrates itself into elements. This happens when the body is buried or cremated. But, in exceptional cases, the body disappears in a brilliant light or into thin air. This has happened in the case of saints like Mirabai, Nandanar, Appayya Samarth, Ramalinga Swami and Tukaram.

148. Dealing with colleagues

You have to be friendly with everybody with whom you are working and thus receive their love and affection, instead of finding fault with them for silly reasons. If you love everybody and receive love in return, you will be happy, others will be happy and the whole place will be full of peaceful vibrations. If you start using filthy language while getting angry, all your good qualities will be clouded, you will be unhappy, others will be unhappy and the whole place will be filled with negative vibrations. Understanding this, you should try to give up that which is not good and try to follow what is good.

149. Avoiding rebirth (by God-remembrance)

Having completed all your worldly responsibilities, it is good that you are now trying to do something that will prepare you to face the end bravely. You should not only face the end bravely, but also try to avoid another birth. This is possible, if you devote all your time for the remembrance of God, by chanting His name — *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*, or any other name of God you like — as much as possible and also by reading the lives of saints and a few verses of *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* daily, that means, doing whatever is necessary to maintain His constant remembrance. The more you pray to Him, the more love you will be able to develop for Him and the less will be your attraction for worldly things. You should feel that you want nothing but God and live only for attaining Him. If you leave yourself entirely in His hands, He will take full care of you like a mother taking care of her child.

150. How to face critical situations

Everyone in the world faces difficulties in life at one time or the other. It is at that time that we must strongly hold on to the holy feet of the Lord and draw strength from Him to face such difficulties bravely. Keep chanting the holy *Ram Nam* and ask all members of your family also to join you in the same whenever

possible. That is the only way to invite Divine intervention so that our life will run smoothly and happily under His Divine guidance.

151. Draw strength from *Ram Nam*

Everyone in the world has one problem or other. The hero is he who tackles them properly with strength and courage. This strength and courage you can get only from the Divine seated in your heart, by communion with Him, by chanting His Name and praying to Him as much as possible with all love and devotion. So, take to the chanting of any name of God — here, we chant *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*. This will help you to purify and strengthen your mind, which is necessary to face the daily battle of life.

152. Love versus jealousy

You say that though you have not done anything wrong, some one is jealous of you and wants to harm you. In most cases this may be only imaginary but, as long as you feel so, you can tackle the situation successfully by loving that person with all your heart and dealing with him or her as if he or she is your closest friend. For this you have to first take away from your mind the idea that she or he is jealous of you. Assert yourself that all are loving you and you should give them back that

much love, or even more, in return. This attitude of yours will bring a great change within you and keep you happy and cheerful always

153. Make life happy by accepting God's Will

We have no patience. We lose our peace. We get angry. We blame others for that. All these happen because we have no faith that it is done by God's will or that it is done by God for our good. Instead, if we have God-remembrance constantly, we will be able to feel that everything has happened by God's will only and that must be for our good. Then, either we may keep quiet, or take action as prompted by God at that time. By this practice we will be able to maintain peace always in all walks of life.

154. Difficult to understand saints

We have so many ideas about saints and if their actions do not conform to our ideas, we are baffled. Those who closely live with saints, have also the same problem unless they make up their mind to accept that whatever the saints say or do is right. If we do not understand that immediately, we can ask them for clarification, they will surely remove our confusion, and we will then wonder why we were unnecessarily getting our mind baffled.

Saints talk from different levels of consciousness. Sometimes they are very human and at other times Divine. This may be because they have to deal with different personalities who are in different stages of progress. This means they do not give the same advice to all alike. For householders, who are not yet in a position to submit to God's will in all matters, Pujya Mataji's advice is that they should be careful about the propitious time for their travels and other undertakings. To advanced Sadhakas, she says: "Keep chanting *Ram Nam* and remember Beloved Papa constantly, especially when you are travelling or undertaking any work."

Whatever be the actions or thoughts of saints, they are always one with the Divine and anybody sitting in their presence for some time will feel the unearthly peace descending on them.

155. Identification of the *Atman*

On the question of miseries in the world, brought about by torture, violence etc., we cannot find an answer from the plane of consciousness we are in. We have to raise ourselves to a higher plane of consciousness when we will be able to see things as they are. For that our Gurudev has been advising the chanting of *Ram Nam* or any other intense

Sadhana, which will purify our mind and enable us to realize the Truth.

From the physical plane, it is really painful to see what is going on before us. You must have understood from *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* that what goes on in the physical plane is purely on the surface and deep within, the *Atman* — the soul or our True Being — is not affected by whatever happens to the physical aspect. So ours is to identify ourselves with the *Atman* — our True Being and Existence — and know that we are not merely the physical body.

156. Suffering in married life

Sufferings come to people as a result of their own actions done in previous lives and therefore nobody else should be held responsible for the same. So your husband has come only as an instrument for working out your previous *Karmas*. To bear the sufferings bravely, you need a lot of courage and strength that you will get if you take refuge in God by chanting His name constantly. So we suggest that you should take to the chanting of the holy and all-powerful *Ram Nam*: *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*, as many times as possible — minimum 11000 times daily and love your husband with all your heart, whatever he may be doing to you. Do not blame him for his ill

treatment towards you.

If your heart is pure by the chanting of the holy *Ram Nam*, and if your love is sincere, you will find a marked change in your husband's attitude in the very near future.

157. *Sadhana* in daily life

It is good that you like the chanting of God's name. You can do the *Japa* while sitting, walking or travelling. You can also keep chanting the name when you are doing physical work. When you are serving old or sick people, you can conveniently keep chanting the Name with all love and devotion and also look upon those you serve as different forms of God Himself. Service done with this attitude becomes worship. God's work means any work that you do with the feeling that it is God whom you are serving.

158. Seeing God in others

Saints' words come true sooner or later. Seeing God in everything will help us develop humility. When we see God in others, we naturally revere them and love them in the real sense. Without seeing God in them, the love will be purely physical and not the real love. When we see God in others, naturally our head bows down before them, at least mentally. This practice will gradually purify

our mind and ultimately lead us to the Supreme Goal.

159. Depression and remedies

Depression is your worst enemy and therefore has to be got rid of immediately. Depression saps all your energy and leaves you frustrated. This is not the attitude to be taken by one who has had some contact with Beloved Papa or Mataji and their teachings. When you say you have found Beloved Papa in your heart, why all this lamentation? When you throw yourself in His hands, why ask for death? Death of the body is not the solution for all the problems. What is wanted is death of the ego. Try for that and all will be well. Say: "Thy will be done. I am your child. I am entirely in your hands. Make use of me in whatever way you will." Thus feel that whatever you are doing is done by His power and you do not have to worry about what happens afterwards.

When we are living in the world, we have to meet with different people, of different characters. We cannot expect all of them to behave and deal with us as we like. We have to understand that they are acting according to their nature and that they are only instruments of the Lord to play the particular part in His universal game. You are getting

upset only because you are losing your hold on the centre. You can move about anywhere in the circumference successfully and cheerfully provided your hold on that centre is firm. You can hold on to the centre only by chanting *Ram Nam* or by identifying yourself with the Self. It is our unfailing help.

So throw off these moods of depression and be strong again, see the beauty of His manifestation everywhere and see how He plays this universal game. Watch this as a dispassionate witness. This should be possible for you. Hold on to the Self — the Centre. If the work is very tiring, you must learn the knack of communing with your Self every now and then, when you have a few seconds' break from work. This will restore your energy and keep you fit. Be sure He will take care of you and lead you on.

160. Ego-sense

Everything is God, and God alone does anything that happens through any particular form, though each individual feels that he or she is doing everything himself or herself. This is because of the ego-sense, caused by the mask of ignorance that God has put on Himself. So looking at things from this plane of consciousness, everything happens as willed by God. But every individual feels that he is

doing everything and because of the sense of doership, he suffers for his bad actions and enjoys for his good actions.

This process will continue as long as the ego-sense is there. Ego-sense will continue until one does intense *Sadhana* by which the mask of ignorance is torn off and he or she realizes his or her oneness with God. This means that we are all God Himself but obsessed by the ego-sense. Intellectually you may be able to say that God does everything and everything is God etc. etc. This must become an experience that can come only by *Sadhana*, which will take one beyond the mind and intellect.

161. *Ram Nam* chanting in crisis

When crises confront us, instead of being cowed down by them, we should be able to face them bravely, drawing the necessary strength and courage from the Divine within us. For this, chanting of the holy Name of God — any name you like — is the way. By chanting, we will be able to commune with God and that communion will give us the strength. So, start chanting His name, if you have not already done so, and thus remember the Divine seated in your heart, commune with Him and pray to Him. Be sure that He will listen to your prayer.

162. On inter-caste marriage

If your son is anxious to marry a girl who is not belonging to your caste, you may explain to him that for various reasons it will be better if he marries a girl belonging to your own caste. But if he insists on marrying the same girl, you may accept it as God's will, for the sake of avoiding friction and the consequent unpleasantness. You should also give your full blessings for his happy married life. This will help maintain the love between you two intact, bringing peace and happiness to the entire family.

163. God as Guru

You have *Ram Nam* with you. Chant it constantly. It is He who moulds your life and does everything. So leave it all to Him. If you entirely depend upon Him, He will guide you from within and without — from within by giving you the right prompting to do certain things, and from without by bringing about external circumstances favourable to your acting according to the prompting.

164. Individual — a part of the universal

Glad you are trying to change your attitude. It will definitely do you good. Have always positive thoughts. The moment a negative thought comes, pray to God to give

you strength to see the brighter side of everything. There is no harm in seeking help from anybody. It is only you asking yourself in a different form. The Self in you has projected forth as many. Duality in creation is only an appearance. Everything in creation belongs to the universal body — God or Self.

An example for this is a huge tree with thousands of leaves and fruits. All the leaves and fruits make one unit — the tree. Each leaf and fruit seen separately can be said to be having individuality. So are all of us in the universe. We feel we are individuals forgetting that we are part of the universal manifestation.

165. Overcoming the ego and ego-sense

Keep chanting the holy *Ram Nam* as much as possible and try to bring to your mind that everything is He. He does everything. He Himself has projected forth as the innumerable names and forms and it is His power alone that activates every being, including your body. When this feeling becomes strong, you will find that there is no place for the ego. Continue this practice and you will find that 'ego' gets thinner and thinner and ultimately disappears making you realise that there was no 'ego' and it was only 'ego-sense'.

166. Conquering ambitions

To conquer ambitions, the best way is to bring to your mind the futility of worldly ambitions and attainments. Everything is perishable in the world and whatever we attain — position, possessions etc. — will have to be left behind along with our body one day or the other. The only one thing that is eternal is God Himself and by communing with Him alone we will get eternal happiness.

167. Judge by watching the mind

One's spiritual progress can be judged by watching the state of mind — whether it is peaceful, whether it aspires for material things or whether it is thinking of and aspiring for God more and more.

168. Synchronising *Japa* and thoughts

Repeating *Ram Nam* mechanically in the beginning is unavoidable as it will take some time to synchronise repetition and thought. For this, when repeating *Ram Nam*, keep the mind contemplating on God's attributes. You can even go on talking to God: "You are all-pervading; You have manifested as everything; You are in everything; everything is in You; You are seated in my heart, etc. etc." Such practice will take away all worldly thoughts and bring better concentration.

169. Chanting *Ram Nam* and results

If you put your heart and soul into your studies, you are sure to pass. If you study well, there is no reason why you should not pass in the examinations. Now-a-days the examinations are made so easy that it is really difficult to fail!

You must also chant *Ram Nam* regularly. Without *Ram Nam* and remembrance of God, you cannot have success in any walk of life. So, if you want success, naturally you have to chant *Ram Nam* and remember Beloved Papa.

Every morning at least for half an hour — and similarly in the evening, sit quietly, chant *Ram Nam* and also keep chanting *Ram Nam* during your free time instead of worrying about various things. When the mind thinks of all sorts of things, it loses the power of concentration. Chanting of *Ram Nam* will bring the mind to one point and thus make it stronger. If you have *Ram Nam* always with you, you will not get angry or quarrel with others.

170. Self-sacrifice in married life

To lead a really happy married life a lot of adjustment is required on the part of both husband and wife — more from the wife. She has to sacrifice her petty interests for the sake of larger interests, i.e., peace and harmony at home. She should never assert her own way

in anything but leave it to her husband to have the final say. Of course, the husband also should try to act in the same manner without asserting too much. Asserting is all right to a certain point but should be followed by submission. Then, there will be no chance for a clash.

171. Renouncing the sense of doership

God alone is the doer. As such, anything good or bad done by anybody is done by God Himself. But as long as the doer of such actions and those witnessing them have body consciousness, they will naturally think that they themselves are doing those actions and those who witness will either praise or blame the individual as the case may be. Whereas, when we raise ourselves to a higher level of consciousness and start seeing everything as actions emanating from the one and only POWER, then there is nothing to be labelled as good or bad. Everything just happens. That is all. So, our efforts should be to go beyond body consciousness. That is to realize that we are not merely the body but the all-pervading *Atman*. This will solve all our problems in the world.

172. God does everything for our good

As devotees, we have every right to beg

of Beloved Papa, who is our real parent, to do something for us. At the same time we must be able to submit to His will in all matters knowing fully well that He is all compassion and whatever He does must be ultimately for our good.

This is a bitter pill to swallow but it is true. If you do this there is no reason for disappointment. The struggle will cease and your mind will be at peace. As Beloved Papa has mentioned many times, absolute surrender to God's will, will bring peace immediately.

173. Experience God by chanting *Ram Nam*

You may take His Name only if you feel the need to experience the peace and bliss of God. If you are satisfied with what the world gives you, you may not be tempted to think of anything higher but those who have understood and experienced the transitory nature of things in the world will aspire for happiness that will abide with them always. As this eternal happiness can come only by God-experience, one has to strive for attaining God. One of the means to attain God is the chanting of God's Name.

174. Chant any name of God

One can take to the chanting of any name of God. What is important is that while

chanting, we should feel that we are chanting the Name of the Lord seated within us and everywhere about us and that only by His will everything happens in the world. So, with this attitude take to repetition of His Name. If you are already doing *Ram Nam*, intensify it with all faith and devotion.

175. Be content with His *Darshan*, even in dream

To see Beloved Papa in dream is itself good, as it is an indication that you have been dwelling more on God-thought. Do not worry over the fact that Papa kept mum. You should take it that Beloved Papa wanted you to feel content with His *Darshan*.

176. Divine love is an inner experience

The fathomless love and cooling radiance felt by you, are inherent in everybody but lying dormant. By the purificatory process called *Sadhana*, the veil is removed and then one becomes aware of those traits. Though in many cases God causes it in the presence of some outer agency, actually it is an inner experience. Your effort therefore should be to keep on purifying the inner equipment for the revealment of the real inner content. By that process one becomes the chosen instrument of God, a personification of selfless love and the like.

177. Spiritual practice itself is a joy

Forgetting the God-factor is natural for ordinary people when engaged in profession or while discharging their functions in the family. Consequently, this will subject them to anxieties, tensions and worries, of course with fleeting moments of joy also. But to a keen aspirant, a constant effort will be there from his side to see the finger of God in everything and he will gradually come to realise that everything happens only by the will of God and that it is ultimately for his good. He also realises that there is nothing called mundane and everything is spiritual.

So whatever work he does is spiritual practice and whomever he meets or thinks of is a manifestation of God. Everything is God. He is dealing with God only, in different forms. At this stage it makes no difference for an aspirant whether he prays in the Church, worships in a temple, serves the sick, cooks in the kitchen, serves food, does work in the office, holds *Satsang*, attends *Satsang* or does any type of activity. This practice itself gives so much joy and peace to the aspirant that he is fully satisfied and wants to remain in that state only constantly. But God will lead him further on to higher experiences, leading to the realisation of his perfect oneness with Him and therefore

oneness with His manifestation — the entire universe.

178. Significance of celebrations

Celebrations do help in making us dwell more on God-thought. Rather than treating it as a social function, we should try to see the symbolic significance attached to each and every celebration. Any celebration will have real significance only when it serves as a reminder to us about our ultimate goal. Every such event should make us move closer and closer to God.

179. The right vision

It is said that love sees no faults. Such love should be extended to all by all. Everyone should be looked upon not merely as a person but as God Himself. That is the right vision we should develop. By striving to get that vision and ultimately attaining it, we will be raising ourselves to God-hood.

180. Feel God's presence always and everywhere

In the beginning it is all right to crave to go to the Ashram where you enjoy more peace. But a stage should come when the craving also becomes less intense and ultimately disappears, as you are able to maintain God-remembrance

constantly and the feeling of Beloved Papa's presence always and everywhere, not only in the Ashram but everywhere.

181. Maintain unbroken remembrance

Glad that you are enjoying the indescribable bliss of Beloved Papa and Mataji's remembrance. At the same time you complain that it is not continuous and lasting. Be happy you are blessed with the indescribable joy even for short periods. By Beloved Papa's grace the period of remembrance, and the consequent joy will become longer and longer until at last you experience 'no break' in it at all. Some dirt of your old *Vasanas* and effects of previous actions pull the mind down. By further intense *Sadhana* and the resultant purification of the mind you will be able to maintain unbroken remembrance and the ecstatic state.

182. Working out one's *Prarabdha*

We are living in a world that is full of suffering and nobody is free from suffering. There are many families who are also beset with problems. They have children who are born blind, handicapped or mentally retarded, which is a life-long source of worry and anxiety for them. Why these things should happen, nobody can easily find out. Similarly, some persons, who are not devoted or are apparently

undeserving, seem to enjoy life whereas some devotees or deserving ones are suffering in various ways. Perhaps nobody would have taken birth if it is not to work out his/her *prarabdha* in the world. There is no other way except to work them out. To work it out and at the same time remain calm and peaceful in the midst of adverse happenings or circumstances, there is but one way. That is to have His constant remembrance through chanting of His holy Name.

183. Having a 'clean slate' before death

Do not forget that our life is too short to be spent in nursing animosity or registering wrong. You have better things to do during the short span of life. Feel that everyone is a part of the universal body of Beloved Papa and that whatever thoughts, words or actions arise from him are motivated by Beloved Papa only. This is the truth. As Beloved Papa's power is absolute, every movement takes place by His power only. No individual is responsible for his or her acts, as He does everything. The moment you remember this, you will not only be free from any ill will towards any one, but will also be filled with love for him.

Always have a 'clean slate'. Purge off all anger and resentment. Fill your heart with love. Otherwise after you drop the body,

you will carry with you the resentment and ill will for births and births. Please do not do it. Wash off all the dirt here and now. Beloved Papa's remembrance alone should fill your heart.

184. *Sadhana* prompted by Guru's grace

The *Sadhaka* has to struggle hard to attain the highest goal — realisation of the impersonal aspect of the Guru. This he can do only by Guru's grace. You are prompted to do *Sadhana* because of Guru's grace only. The Guru has chosen to reveal himself in your heart and has started making you do the spiritual practices. Feel every moment that it is the Guru who is making you do the *Sadhana*. When you leave things to Him, you become carefree and will be at peace.

185. Worldly thoughts drop off by themselves

Glad to know *Ram Nam* has been working wonders in you. The Truth is that consciously we do not renounce anything. When our mind is absorbed in God-thought, worldly thoughts drop off by themselves as they do not want to cling on to some one who is not interested in them. The holy Name will lead you to the supreme goal flooding you with the peace and bliss absolute!

186. Worshipping the Formless through Forms

God is nameless, formless and attributeless. He has manifested Himself or projected forth as the innumerable universes in which we are all included. To meditate on His nameless, formless and attributeless aspect is very difficult. Our *Rishis*, who had the experience of God and who were very compassionate, found that it would be easier for man to worship and meditate on God in His manifested form. So they personified His different powers in the manifestation, such as the power of creation as Brahma, of preservation as Vishnu and of destruction as Siva. They also personified the other powers as gods and recommended worshipping them. Then came the *Avatars*, direct descents of that Supreme Power, like Rama, Krishna etc. and also saints who realized their oneness with the Supreme Being,

It must be understood that worship of any of the above forms is worship of the Supreme Being Itself. You need not have the fear that other Gods will be angry if you worship only one. When worshipping any one form of the Supreme Being, bring to your mind that *that* form is a symbol of the Supreme Being and that you are really worshipping the Supreme Being through that symbol.

If you take to the chanting of God's name — any Name of God — constantly, your mind will get purified and you will gradually be able to understand things clearly and all your doubts will be cleared from within, finally making it possible for you to realize the Truth.

187. Self-enquiry or self-surrender

If you are drawn to the path of self-enquiry — “who am I” — do it sincerely and with all intensity. You will go on eliminating what you are not — the body, mind and intellect — and your mind will reach your own source, that is the Self. This practice, though easily said, will take a lot of time and effort. You have to persevere.

Whatever path you follow — the path of self-enquiry or the path of surrender — you have to work hard. The progress will depend upon the intensity of your aspiration to realize the Truth. So the Lord alone is your refuge. Feel that way from the very bottom of your heart. Feel that you are nothing and you can do nothing. It is He alone who does everything. Go on saying: “Everything is Yourself”. Thus you will be able to eliminate your little ‘I’, by steady and intense practice. God will listen to your sincere prayers. The response will be according to your mental purity.

188. To be free from worry and tension

It is the attitude of the mind that colours an incident as positive or negative. If you fervently hammer on your brain that everything happens only by the will of God and that He always means well, the so called colouring will not be there at all and therefore, you will be free from worries and tension.

189. Real love

It is true all the trouble in the world is caused by attachment. The so-called love is not real love. Real love begins only when we start seeing the Divine in everybody and there will be no attachment then. Instead of depending upon friends and relations, we should depend only on God, who will come in some form or other when we need help.

190. Realising oneness with the Guru

The Guru awakens the disciple to the Reality and guides him step by step but it is up to the disciple to do the spiritual practices and surrender his little 'I' (ego) so as to realise that he and his Guru are one. Actually, the Guru and disciple are one but that has to be realized by the disciple by spiritual practice. Guru or God does not replace the individuality of a devotee. Guru shows the way and the devotee, by intense

Sadhana, has to erase his ego and then realise the oneness.

191. *Vyabhicharini Bhakti*

Vyabhicharini Bhakti means trying to be devoted to God, at the same time being devoted to something else. If you are chanting different *Mantras* the only thing you have to feel is that all the *Mantras* you chant are of the same God, who is one. He has many names. You may call Him by any name. If you have this attitude, there is no harm in chanting different *Mantras* as they come to you.

Be firm in your faith that God is the all-pervading and absolute Reality. He Himself has manifested as the entire universe and He is seated in your heart. Whatever name you chant is His name and whatever prayer you make goes to him.

192. Feeling of separation

You are not separate from God. The feeling of separation comes because of ignorance, followed by the sense of doership. Consequently you suffer the good and bad results respectively of the actions done. When ignorance is removed by *Sadhana*, it will be realized that you have been ever one with God and it was only a 'feeling' of separation. So, carry on with your *Sadhana* and you will realize who you are.

193. Don't hurt others' feelings

When you are doing *Sadhana*, you have to be careful to see that you do not hurt the feelings of others; instead you must be so loving that all others feel the warmth of it when they come near you or even think of you. There is no need to get angry at all for any reason. When you want God, nothing else should matter to you. Try to remember Him constantly and pray to Him to make you feel His presence constantly and to guide you in your *Sadhana*. This practice itself will give you the necessary strength.

194. God does everything at the proper time

Discriminatory treatment will bring only disharmony, discord and unhappiness, though for the time being it may satisfy the ego. When you depend upon Beloved Papa, you have nothing to be afraid of. He will do everything in His own time. Take courage and be sure Beloved Papa is with you and will protect you from all harm. In the meantime, have patience and perfect faith in Him.

195. Ups and downs in Sadhana — remedy

Real aspiration and earnestness in *Sadhana* come only by God's grace. The effort of the *Sadhaka* is to keep up the tempo in the *Sadhana* but due to many external and internal

causes, there will be a downward pull and the *Sadhaka* may even lose all interest in *Sadhana* for a while. Then again he will try to make it up and thus it will go on. So you should not be worried over such ups and downs. When you lose enthusiasm in *Sadhana*, the best way to regain that is to court *Satsang*. Go to a saint, sit by his side for some time and hear his teachings. You are sure to be lifted up.

196. *Sadhana* for happy life

To lead a most useful and happy life, you have to be in tune with the supreme Lord seated in your heart. This is possible by chanting His name as much as possible, remembering Him constantly and praying to Him for guidance before you start any work, however minor it may be. By this practice you will be able to ultimately feel that you are only an instrument of God and it is He who is working through you.

197. Worship in temples

Devotees are attached to deities whom they call as their own *Ishta-Devata*. They are drawn to these deities, may be, because of the *Sadhana* in their earlier life. But whatever deity we worship, actually we are worshipping the Supreme Being only. One deity is not different from the other. This must be kept in

our mind. We find more followers in a particular temple because there they, by total and unqualified devotion and prayer, feel the living presence of their *Ishta Devata*.

It is true that a good number of temple-goers do not bother about the philosophy or on the indwelling God. Some are satisfied with some sort of external worship while some go there to pray for material prosperity or for peace of mind. At the same time some do go with total *Bhakti*. There are different stages in one's progress towards the realisation of the ultimate. When God wills that they should go to a higher level, He will bring about suitable situations by which they will become more introvert.

198. See God in every being

Everything in the universe is the manifestation of God. In most cases God has put on the mask of ignorance and plays this universal *Lila*. In rare cases only He removes the mask and says that He is God Himself. As far as a *Sadhaka* is considered he has to see God first in saints and then in every being and creature. Even in saints who say that they are one with God, there are differences in powers manifested through them. That means, the Divine works through them in different ways to fulfil His will.

199. God will come to the rescue

A *Sadhaka* should know that everything happens only by His will and that He always means well. One may find it difficult to accept while placed in the so-called adverse situations but by constant hammering into the brain of the above truth, one will be able to lead a life of peace and bliss.

If one takes refuge in the all-merciful Almighty, He will not only grant the devotee the needed strength and courage to face every ordeal bravely but also ultimately lead the devotee to the goal. Even one's father or mother may abandon their child but not God, who will come to one's rescue the moment the devotee places himself totally at His feet. So do not get dispirited. Try to do intense chanting of the holy and all-powerful *Ram Nam* coupled with prayer to Beloved Papa seated in your heart to bless you with His constant remembrance. Rest assured your prayer will be heard.

200. When and where we can meet a true saint

True saints are very rare in this world and to recognize them is difficult. It is said that only saints can recognize saints. So, what to speak of *Sadhakas* or ordinary men! They sometimes doubt the genuineness of even a perfect saint but may get carried away to

accept a bogus one as a saint.

The real way to understand a saint is to go and sit at his feet for some time. You then intuitively feel an unearthly peace descending on you and your mind remains still, as long as you are in his presence.

If you are really earnest and praying to God sincerely for the contact of a saint, be sure that God will guide you. It is really a great blessing to come in contact with a saint and to be in his presence even if it is for a short while. So pray to God to bless you with such an occasion.

Some devotees stay physically close to saints but unless they are able to tune themselves mentally, the physical proximity does not help at all. They may even feel that they are far away. Such feelings do come and go.

201. Never have ill feelings

You say you have some differences with your father. This should not be. If you feel that your father is responsible; forgive him but if the cause of the differences is otherwise, you must seek forgiveness from him. You must never have ill feelings towards any one; more so with your parents.

In old age one may not be able to have the strength to adjust life to suit the convenience of others. So it is up to the youngsters to

understand their condition and not to take it seriously. Serving one's parents is considered as the best and most purifying form of *Sadhana* and takes one to God-realisation. So make the best of the opportunity given to you. Your way of expressing your appreciation for the hard work of your parents should come out in the form of deep reverence towards them and in following what they ask you to do.

202. Make best use of difficulties

The moment you chant the Name, your mind must be lifted above all the names and forms, to the all-pervading Reality, which should immediately bring you the peace and bliss of the Eternal. You will then understand that all the so-called difficulties, joys and sorrows belong to the surface — the play of the Lord — and should be given only so much value. Keep your mind ever in a state beyond all the pairs of opposites. Kunti Devi asked for more and more difficulties only because she found that when everything was going on favourably, there was no chance to think of a higher life. Difficulties alone make one try for something that is eternal and full of peace and bliss. So make the best use of your difficulties, by raising your mind higher and higher, understanding that they are also transient. It seems one man was having a

placard in his room reading: 'EVEN THIS WILL PASS AWAY', which reminded him that everything that came to him — good or bad — would not last long.

203. Be free from tension by loving all

The decision of the court may have naturally caused some uneasiness amongst you all because of the possible problems that may arise while implementing the judgment. Submitting to God's will, please meet the other party in a cordial way and try to implement the judgment as fairly as possible for both sides. Have absolutely no ill will towards any of them. Instead, develop genuine love towards all of them. This may be difficult but, by humbling down to the will of God and accepting the same cheerfully, you should be able to do it. The result will be simply wonderful, as such an attitude on your part will surely free you from all tension and bring you peace immediately. Such peace is worth much more than anything else.

204. Advice to a newly married girl

You are just entering a new life and have to gather many experiences. We have to live in different places, mixing with different people. If we get too attached to certain people, we will have to suffer the pain of separation

which is inevitable. So, you should give up attachment to any form in the world if you want to be happy. You must be able to love those around you and enjoy their company and at the same time you should not feel sorry if, by God's will, you have to leave them. To lead such a detached life, you should have a strong background and that is the remembrance of God by chanting His holy and all-powerful Name. You loved your parents and brothers all these years. Now you are in your new home. You should now love your husband and all at home in the same way you loved your parents earlier and feel at home wherever you are.

205. Method of prayer

Chant *Ram Nam* and spend some time contemplating on the attributes of God as all-pervading, as the entire manifestation and as seated in everybody's heart. After a few minutes' chanting of *Ram Nam* you may even address God as follows:- "Oh Lord, You are all-pervading. You have manifested as the entire universe, which means whatever I see and whatever I think of, is Your own form. You are seated in everybody's heart. Please reveal Yourself in my heart and make me merge my individuality in Your eternal Being and Existence." Again go on chanting the Name for some time and repeat this prayer. This

practice will keep your mind away from all worldly thoughts and help you to get centered on God.

206. Struggle in a *Sadhaka's* life

To detach oneself from the body and identify oneself with the *Atman*, is not a very easy thing. It requires long practice. It is also to be noted that by such identification with the *Atman*, the sufferings to the body are not removed suddenly. It will be felt by that person that the sufferings belong only to the body and not to his real Being. You should not feel dejected that you could not succeed by a few days' efforts.

You can chant all the *Mantras* which you are chanting now but only feel that they are not different. They are all referring to the supreme One, who is all-pervading and who is seated in everybody's heart.

It is not necessary for you to sit in a particular posture though sitting steady in *Padmasan* will help you a lot. In any posture you adopt, you can keep your mind centred on God. Sweetness of the Name can be felt only after a long practice.

It is true that *Sadhakas* are advised not to attend weddings and funerals. It is better to avoid such visits even if it causes some displeasure to certain relatives and friends. If

at all the *Sadhaka* attends such events, he or she must be able to maintain constant identification with the *Atman* which is birthless, deathless and changeless. Then the *Sadhaka* will be able to witness the whole show dispassionately.

207. Intense aspiration needed

For Self-realisation, first of all what is needed is an intense and fiery aspiration to realise the Self. Next comes the contact of a Saint, to initiate you on the path, and implicit faith in the teachings and guidance of the Guru, followed by earnest and intense *Sadhana*. When you have intense aspiration, God will see to it that you are taken to a saint, who will thereafter guide you. Till then, pray to the Lord for such a contact. Keep chanting the holy Name of God as much as possible — any Name that appeals to you. Read the lives and writings of saints regularly.

208. The best way to erase the ego

A *Sadhaka*'s life is all struggle but at the same time the very practice to get rid of the ego and to see the Divine in everybody is blissful. The best way to erase the ego is to assert "Oh Lord! You are everything; You are the body; You are the mind; You are the intellect; You are the senses and You are the

power that activates all these.” If this is really felt, there is no place for the “I”. Go on practising like this.

When you see others, you should try to see the Divine in them and thus give true love to them. You will find this practice giving you more and more joy. For this practice you do not have to seek new avenues. Right from the morning you can start it wherever you are. The moment you open your eyes, feel that all the things that you see are God Himself in different forms, and every atom or form is filled with His presence. Every person you meet is God Himself. Train your mind like this and you will find life very blissful.

When you go to bed after the day’s work, feel that you are lying on the lap of God, and when you get up in the morning, feel that you are getting up from the lap of God. This is not mere imagination. The truth is that everything is God. But something obstructs us from having that experience. That obstruction is ignorance, which can be removed by the practice mentioned above.

209. Chant *Ram Nam* in all your waking hours

You should not be dejected when you are overpowered by sleep. Make it a point to keep chanting *Ram Nam* during all your waking

hours. Sleep when you feel like sleeping and do not worry about it. Be sure that Beloved Papa, who has awakened you from within and enabled you to start doing *Sadhana*, will reveal Himself in your heart in His own time. Take joy in the fact that He has made you walk on the path, and you are sure to reach the goal.

If you want to practise meditation and take to *Yoga* etc., you must first contact a saint who will guide you on the path. Do not start doing meditation or *Yoga asanas* by merely reading books. The safest thing for you, if you are anxious to walk on the spiritual path, will be, to take to the chanting of God's name with all love and devotion. God will guide you from within. If external guidance is needed, He will make you come in contact with a saint at the appropriate time.

210. Homes for destitute — code of conduct

Many resort to *Sevashrama* and similar institutions only because of their dire need for refuge. They all are coming there after getting lots of kicks and knocks in life and thus getting frustrated. It is therefore the responsibility of the management to give them not merely shelter but solace and everything necessary to make their life happy and peaceful, thus making them feel quite at home in every respect. For this, those who are

managing the *Sevashrama*, have to be utterly self-sacrificing, forgetting their own personal interest and serving only for the benefit of others. It requires a lot of self-control, as, ordinarily one is likely to lose balance, get angry or feel depressed etc. Both have to be avoided by drawing necessary strength and courage from the Divine within, for which constant remembrance of God is the only way. So, side by side with service, chanting of God's Name must go on so as to maintain His constant remembrance. Then everything else will follow. All the inmates together should do regular *Bhajans* and individually keep chanting the Name of God as much as possible so as to create a peaceful atmosphere.

211. To control mind — faith and practice

Faith and practice combined can enable an aspirant to overcome any and every difficulty that confronts him in his struggle for control of mind. What is needed is determination and perseverance. Just as *Kripa* or grace of saints is essential for one's spiritual progress, one's own effort is also a must.

212. Study the mind and choose your life

Those who have understood the hollowness of worldly life and the futility of running after worldly pleasures will have to

seriously think whether they are prepared to sacrifice the so-called worldly transitory pleasures for the sake of attaining eternal happiness. Once this decision is made, they must be able to stick to it. Mostly the danger is that they are pulled by the lower nature and are therefore tempted to return to worldly life, when it may be too late. So they are neither here nor there and suffer the consequences.

So, if you want to lead a completely spiritual life, you have to study your mind and find out if you are prepared for such a dedicated and austere life. If there is any vacillation, it is better to enter worldly life and have the experience of happiness and sorrow etc. connected with it. Nobody else can decide this for you, except of course Beloved Papa seated in your heart.

213. God's name — the powerful weapon

To pierce through *Maya* the strongest weapon is chanting of God's name. The moment you chant it, feeling that you are chanting the name of One who is all-pervading, who is all-powerful and who has manifested Himself as innumerable forms in the universe, you will find the veil gradually becoming transparent. Eventually you will see through it the true state of things. Ultimately the veil

is torn off and you realize your oneness with the eternal Existence.

Such is the power of the holy Name. You would have understood that Beloved Papa had also this as his main weapon, besides perfect surrender to God's will. These took him all over the country in a state of perfect joy and absolute fearlessness, though for all external purposes he was like a beggar owning nothing and not knowing where he would get his next meal or a place to rest. But the constant feeling of the presence of the Divine, within and without everywhere, kept him blissful.

214. *Samadhi*

Samadhi is in fact the culmination of all spiritual practices. All the practices are done for the purification of the mind of its accumulated desires, effects of good and bad actions etc etc. When the mind is free of all these, it ceases to exist as mind which was standing in the way of realizing God. In this state the sense of separation (ego-sense) is gone and the experience is of the nameless, formless aspect of God. This is called *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, transcending the body, mind, intellect and senses. There is no consciousness of the body or the outside world.

When the aspirant comes back to body

consciousness and mixes in the world, he craves to go back to the transcendent state as there is more peace in it. This is because he has experienced only one aspect of God — the nameless, formless aspect. He has to continue his *Sadhana* for some time more to experience the universe also as the manifestation of Self — God. It is at this stage he is able to say “I am the all-pervading Absolute Reality. My body is the entire universe”. This is called *Sahaja Samadhi*. Devotees, who are the votaries of God’s name and are trying to look upon the entire universe as the manifestation of God, get so much joy in chanting the Name and meeting other devotees as if they are transported to *Sahaja Samadhi*.

215. Saints feel one with entire humanity

Medical treatment, one of the unavoidable needs of human life, has become so costly now that even the middle class people can hardly afford it. What is then the plight of the poorer section of our brethren? There are many hospitals run by the Government giving free treatment to poor patients, but the conditions in such hospitals are so bad that patients prefer private nursing homes, as in any case they have to purchase medicines even in hospitals though they are supposed to be given free.

Under the circumstances when Government cannot do much, it is the tender heart of the saints that takes the lead. Saints feel one with the entire humanity, nay, the entire creation. As such, the suffering of a section is their own suffering. So there is no wonder that they start institutions for giving as much help to the suffering humanity as divinely possible by making expert medical aid of any type available for anybody at any time.

216. Harmony and love in the family

Human possibility is limited because the little “self” in everybody can move only in a small circle. Those who have given up the little “self” and embraced the universal Self can alone engage themselves in universal service, reaching divine possibilities. In the houses of devotees, there should not be any quarrel or misunderstanding. There may be differences of opinion. The differences should be settled by talks done lovingly. Make it a point amongst all of you in the house that nobody should raise his or her voice in anger for any reason. There cannot be any such reason that cannot be settled by a loving talk. For this, all should sit together and do *Bhajan* and chant *Ram Nam* regularly. This will bring more harmony. Love in the family should be maintained intact at any cost. Please show

this letter to all and request all to sacrifice their certain petty interests for the sake of the larger interest, i.e. the harmony and love in the family.

217. Have equal respect towards all temples

Everyone should have equal respect towards all temples. A person who normally goes to a particular temple or is attached to a particular temple should have the same attitude towards all temples because the Lord who is worshiped in one temple is the same in all temples. Taking part in all temple activities regularly helps in keeping up the remembrance of God. However, full benefit will be derived only when one practises chanting His name at the time of starting for the temple and continuing the same till he gets back. By this exercise, the mind is tuned to receive the Divine vibrations, which helps in retaining His remembrance at least during that period. A glimpse experienced in this way will make him move closer and closer to Him.

So, when one decides to go to a temple, he should avoid any other topics, should not allow any of the negative tendencies, such as anger, jealousy, hatred etc., to come and occupy his mind. If at all any such thought arises, chanting of God's name should be done more intensely.

218. God's will is supreme

For one who is born in the world, the only thing that is certain is death. As they say, "Life is but a journey from birth to death." There is no need to fear death. After all, what dies is this perishable body. The indwelling spirit of man, which is the *Atman*, is eternal.

You need not feel bad that you did not take your father to the hospital, which you think would have saved him. As he was destined to drop the body at that time, nothing would have saved him. The doctors' wrong diagnosis, and therefore your not taking him to the hospital and later his serious condition — were all to fulfill God's will. There are cases where, in spite of extreme care and all conveniences, some persons have to suffer or lose their life. So you have only to take it that your father lived his span of life and as willed by God has gone back to Him. Nobody could have done anything in the matter, as God's will is supreme.

219. For peace and happiness in the house

It is the responsibility of everyone in the household to see that he or she entertains only such thoughts and undertakes only such actions as would generate harmony, peace and happiness in the house. Everyone should also

give up such thoughts and actions as would create disharmony, disturbance and unhappiness. The choice is ours.

If we choose the former, all have to develop an attitude of love and affection to one another, and love and reverence to elders. Effort to develop this will automatically make them sacrifice their petty, personal likes and dislikes, tolerate others' shortcomings, forgive others for their faults and love them in spite of all their weaknesses. If we practise this and sincerely strive for success, we will be in the very process of making our mind perfectly pure; thus qualifying to possess all the Divine qualities. Our life will be blessed and the atmosphere in the house will be saturated with the power and peace of God, so much so that we will be converting the household into a veritable heaven. To create a congenial atmosphere, all of you together should do *Bhajans* for at least half an hour in the mornings and evenings and also keep chanting the holy and all-powerful *Ram Nam* during all your leisure hours.

When you find that the atmosphere at home disturbs the peace of mind, the best thing you can do is to call everybody and tell them that such an attitude will not do good to anyone at home. Everyone should try to see good points in others, instead of criticising and

thinking ill of others. Love and harmony among all members of the family can alone make the house a heaven; otherwise the opposite will be the result. To achieve this, all should sit together and do *Ram Nam* chanting with faith and devotion.

220. “Contentment is a perpetual feast”

The pattern of life's graph is different for each person. Very few have a smooth sailing all through. In most cases there are 'ups and downs' and in very few cases too many 'downs' and very few 'ups'. This does not depend upon one's qualifications or capacity. We have seen many cases where, very deserving persons have to struggle very hard to exist, whereas some persons who are apparently absolutely useless, prosper in life holding high positions. These can be explained only as the effects of their previous *Karma*, which nobody can alter.

In your case you have been struggling hard in spite of Beloved Papa's hearty blessings. Perhaps but for the blessings, things might have been still worse. However, when saints bless, it is not merely for one's material progress but also for something more. After all, such material gains and losses are so transitory that they should not be given too much importance. We must be able to adjust

our life with whatever we are able to earn and thus remain content in all situations. As they say, “contentment is a perpetual feast”. So you have to accept the situation and be sure that whatever you are destined to get, you will get and nobody can stand in your way. So carry on with full faith in Beloved Papa and the holy *Ram Nam*.

221. Better to have *Sannyas* in the traditional way

When you are ready for *Sannyas*, it is better to have it in the traditional way, by doing the usual rituals like *Homa* etc. and initiation into an order by a *Mahatma*. This has its own value. Firstly the ritual is very inspiring and secondly it is accepted by all. Especially in North India, a *Sannyasi* who does not belong to the regular order is not permitted in some Mutts nor allowed to sit along with the usual *Sannyasis*. In fact those who have not had it in the usual way, are looked down upon. In many cases, they are asked to state as to who their Guru is, and what *Mantra* the Guru has given etc.

So, for the sake of the society, it is better to have *Sannyas* in the traditional way, though, for one’s own spiritual life, this may not be necessary. As you have to deal with the society and meet many *Mahatmas*, you may find it more

convenient if you accept the traditional order of *Sannyas*.

222. Eschew *siddhis*

When the *Kundalini* is awakened and rises to higher *chakras*, the *Sadhaka* gets different experiences like *ashta bhavas* or *ashta siddhis* and finally realisation. *Ashta bhavas* mean different expressions of one's emotions during *Japa* or *Dhyana* — a *Sadhaka* gets horripilation; he sheds tears profusely; sometimes he laughs, sometimes cries; sometimes he goes into trances, etc. These *bhavas* can give some joy to the *Sadhaka* but one should not crave for such experiences, as they will not help further progress. When such powers come, the *Sadhaka* should pray to the Guru to free him from such experiences and lead him straight to the supreme realisation.

223. Personal and impersonal God!

God with name and form is called personal God. The all-pervading, nameless, formless existence is impersonal God. Guru and God are one. The impersonal God seated within us is the Guru within and God coming in the form of a human being — a Saint — to guide us in the spiritual path is the Guru without. The Guru — personal God in human form — tells us that the real Guru is within.

224. *Brahmacharya*

Strict *Brahmacharya* is considered absolutely necessary for one's spiritual progress. One cannot have enjoyment of the senses and progress on the spiritual path at the same time.

225. Name — panacea for all ills of life

May the holy and all-powerful name *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* spread everywhere. That is the panacea for all the ills of life. That is what clears our vision, taking us from darkness to Light and from death to Immortality. That is our saviour.

To chant *Ram Nam* constantly is not that easy. It requires highest devotion to God, so much so that nothing else matters. The devotee wants only God and nothing but God. He loves God more than anything else. The mind is distracted and does not permit *Ram Nam* always because of its desires for things of the world. By gradual chanting and prayer to the Lord seated in your heart, you will be able to develop such a devotion and chant the Name constantly.

226. Everyone is God Himself

Try to visualize that everyone is God Himself playing different forms and deal with them as such. By doing so you will be able to

love all genuinely and at the same time remain detached. Beloved Papa used to say that the world is exactly as it should be. That is how we should try to accept everything that happens as natural in the world-drama.

It is really thrilling to read all that you have written about the two-year old boy who enjoys hearing *Ram Nam* sung. Beloved Papa comes in innumerable forms, in some forms manifesting divinity from the early age itself. Let us not forget that it is He who plays through this boy as also through all others who are enacting different roles. The saint is He. The sinner is He. Though it is easier to see Him in a saint, we should not be carried away by the wiles of a so-called sinner and forget Him, when He thus hides His divinity. Beloved Papa will surely take good care of the little boy and manifest through him His glory. Blessed are the parents of such a child.

227. Free yourself from anger

You must have noticed that usually we lose our temper when somebody does some mistake or does something against our wishes. If the other person is elderly or above our status we usually do not lose temper, but we do so only with others who are considered junior or below our status. So we have to practise to look upon everyone as different forms of

Beloved Papa himself and therefore worthy of veneration. If this attitude is maintained, you will be free from your anger, whatever may be the faults committed by others.

For this again, constant chanting of *Ram Nam* is the only way. You can also take upon yourself some punishment whenever you make the mistake of losing your temper. As soon as you realize that you have lost your temper you must sit somewhere quietly and chant *Ram Nam* 1000 times or miss the next meal or touch the feet of the person with whom you got angry and ask pardon. This practice will remind you at the proper time that you should control yourself and not lose your temper.

228. God-realisation

For God-realisation, no particular time or period can be prescribed. God-realisation is achieved when our mind is made absolutely pure — free from all *vasanas*, desires etc. The process of purification may be short or long according to the condition of each individual. What we have to do now is to keep chanting the holy *Ram Nam* as much as possible and thus remember Him constantly, dedicate all our actions to God, i.e. bring to our mind that it is by God's power that we are acting and it is for serving God. Thus, by the repetition of *Ram Nam* and dedicated service, the mind will get purified

and further experiences will automatically follow. God's guidance will come from within at the proper time, but keep your goal as God-realisation and nothing less than that.

229. The inexhaustible source of power

As human beings, our powers are limited and when we find that with our limited power we cannot tackle things successfully, we have to pray for Divine intervention. The best way to do it is to chant His Name as much as possible and pray to Him. So make it a point every morning and evening to spend some time in His remembrance and prayer by chanting His all-powerful Name and invoking His blessings. This practice will enable you to face any situation with equanimity and gain success, as by chanting His Name, you will be in tune with the Supreme Being, the inexhaustible source of power lying within you.

230. Be conscious of His eternal presence

First of all you have to invite God into your life. It does not mean that God is not with you. You have only to be conscious of His eternal presence. Chanting His Name and remembering Him constantly can do this. If this is done, you will find a lot of difference in your attitude towards life. Be charitable and give as much love as possible to others. Have

no ill-will towards anybody. This naturally will keep your mind always pure and pave the way for peace and happiness.

You will also come to know that desire for possessing things and enjoying sense pleasures is the worst enemy. So if you reduce your desire for material possessions and enjoyment and at the same time take pleasure in remembering God, you will be able to lead a peaceful and cheerful life. Try to feel that God, being all-powerful and all-pervading, is the one who motivates every being and therefore it is He who is working through you. This practice will take away your tiredness.

231. Take to one *Mantra*

For your *Sadhana*, stick to one *Mantra*. You need not dislike other *Mantras*. All Names are equally great, but, for practice, stick to one *Mantra*. That will enable you to attain concentration. Take it that the other *Mantra* is included in the *Mantra* you are repeating. Otherwise there will be conflict in the mind. By remembrance of the *Mantra*, you will feel the presence of the Guru always with you in Spirit, as Truth, as Reality.

232. Two aspects of the Divine

The Divine has two aspects — one is *Prakriti* and the other is *Purusha*. It is in the

Prakriti aspect that all the conditionings, viz, body, mind, intellect, senses, the outer world etc. exist and it has its own infallible laws. When we understand this truth, there will be no reason to feel disturbed when any of the conditionings is not in order — meaning, the God-factor is present even in these disturbances.

233. Spiritual progress not so fast

Spiritual progress does not go so fast as long as our desire for worldly enjoyments and attainments continues. The moment the desire for God-realisation becomes stronger than desire for worldly enjoyments, you will find progress.

234. Prepare the mind for *Dhyana* — chant *Ram Nam*

Before starting *Dhyana*, you have to prepare your mind for the same. Our Gurudev prescribes constant chanting of God's name with all love and devotion as the preparation for meditation. So, instead of trying for meditation straightaway, continue chanting the name of God — any Name you like — and bring to your mind that you are chanting the name of God who is all-pervading, who has manifested as the universe and who is seated in everybody's heart, and pray to Him to make your progress very fast.

235. Make the house itself a Temple

If it is difficult for you to go to a temple, try to make your house itself a temple by keeping the pictures of the Lord and regularly doing prayers and *Puja* etc. This will create a more congenial atmosphere for your *Sadhana*. You need not worry about what happens outside your house. You need not even feel that outside conditions are not favourable. Of course a more favourable condition would have helped you a lot, but we have to accept everything as given by God Himself and thus remain happy in all conditions and circumstances. Take it that God has placed you in the present condition.

Take it also that everything is the manifestation of the Lord and therefore do not find fault with anything. Keep chanting the holy Name of God constantly and be sure that the whole atmosphere in the house will get gradually surcharged with the peace and power of the holy Name that will naturally bring success and prosperity to every one in the house.

236. Pray for one-pointed love and devotion.

The more intense your aspiration for realisation of God becomes, the less intense will be the desire for anything worldly. So, take *Ram Nam* more and more and pray to Him to

give you one-pointed love and devotion. Automatically love for the worldly things will drop off, just as light, when brought into a dark room, drives away darkness.

237. *Satsang* — the best way to get over depression

To get over the moods of depression, the best way is to engage yourself in *Satsang*. The company of saints and devotees has such a powerful effect on the mind that the mind is immediately lifted up. Chanting of *Ram Nam* after that will not permit the mind to come down. So, court *Satsang* whenever and wherever possible. Instead of depending on others for *Satsang*, you can have regular programmes of chanting of *Ram Nam* and *Bhajan* in your own apartment in which all of you in the house may join. Daily try this for half-an-hour or one hour in the evening. It is sure to make you all regain your cheer.

Ram Nam is so powerful that, when chanted loudly and with all love and devotion, it will surcharge the entire atmosphere with the peace and bliss of the *Mantra* in due course and anybody entering the house will be able to feel it. As Ram is all-pervading, He is there already in your apartment. Chanting of His name will make Him manifest His qualities. So, all of you go on chanting the *Mantra* as much

as possible, sitting together and also keep it going individually whenever you are not engaged in any mental work. Then try to make it constant, except of course your sleeping hours. You will find a remarkable change soon.

238. Differences in family life

You have written about the indifferent attitude of your husband, especially when you are with your parents and not in good health. There must be something, which has hurt him. You have to find out how it could have happened. Either your words or actions must have hurt him. The best thing for you to do in the circumstances is to have a free and frank talk with him and find out why he is so indifferent. But while talking to him, be sure that you do not lose your temper. You must maintain your equanimity and talk to him lovingly.

At this stage, your frank talk will do a lot of good for removing the dark cloud that has come in between you both and thus clearing your way so that both of you may lead a harmonious life. You say you are disgusted with family life. You have expressed this in a mood of depression. You should get over this mood and will surely get over it, if you talk to your husband as suggested above.

239. There is nothing but God

It is always a joy to hear from your closest ones and especially about the closest One, our Beloved Papa. Whatever way you approach Him and whatever *Sadhana* you practise, it is only to maintain His constant remembrance and ultimately to identify everything — everything we see, think of, and touch, with God. There is nothing but God. Our mind was trained in the wrong way to see everything as not God. Now with Guru's touch, the dehypnotising process will bring the mind to its normal state, which is, to see God in everything.

240. Studies are for gaining knowledge

It is not enough to make resolutions but you must also make an honest effort to systematically follow your lessons right from the beginning of the year. This practice will save you the tension, anxiety and risk which would otherwise be your lot if you put off the studies till the last moment. You must also remember that passing the examination is not the mere object of studies. Studies are for gaining knowledge, which would help you to build a career and also serve the society in the years to come.

241. For abiding peace and happiness

The power of the Name of God is not to be measured by the petty favours He grants us. We do not know what is good for us. We are under the illusion that our material possessions will give us happiness. What we really get is momentary pleasure. If we want abiding peace and happiness, the Lord alone can grant us that. For that we have to unconditionally surrender to His will, take total refuge in Him and keep chanting His holy and all-powerful Name constantly.

For our bodily ailments, we go to a doctor and take the medicine prescribed by him. Similarly, for all our mental afflictions, we have to take that one panacea — *Ram Nam* — as prescribed by the doctor, our Guru. So, do not lose faith. Be firm in your conviction that the Lord is always with you. Keep chanting the holy Name as much as possible.

242. God grants only whatever is good

It is true, Beloved Papa assured that chanting of *Ram Nam* can give us everything. When it can take us to the supreme goal of God-realisation, what can it not give? This does not mean that God will grant us whatever we pray for. We may be praying for many things of the world, which if granted, may cause more harm to us than good. So God grants only

whatever is good for us.

With the purification of the mind by properly chanting *Ram Nam* we will get the right knowledge of what we are, what our source is, what our relation with others is, what the world is, what the purpose of our life is and what is God. The purer the mind, the clearer will be our vision. We will not be then praying for anything, as, we will be seeing only the play of God in everything.

243. God is guiding you

Do not feel disturbed by the temporary setbacks in your life. Try to understand them properly so as to evaluate them rightly. God is guiding you. Place yourself in His safe hands and remain happy and peaceful like a carefree child. Be sure that if He closes one door, He opens another door. So do not lose heart.

244. Identify each thought with Beloved Papa

To get over worries and anxieties, you may try to identify each and every thought with Beloved Papa. This practice can be made effective if you send forth a prayer on these lines: "Oh Lord, you are everything, including the so-called desirable and undesirable thoughts that well up in my heart. Why do you come in those ways? Why don't you free me from all thoughts and enable me to get fixed

in Your Real nature.” If you commune with Him in this manner constantly, you will be freed from the onslaught of the negative thoughts. Periodical congregational worship will serve as a booster to one’s spiritual progress.

245. Become conscious of God’s presence

When you have *Ram Nam* or any name of God in your tongue, you should feel that the Lord Himself is with you. It is not that God is not with you at other times. But while chanting the Name you become conscious of God’s presence within you and without you — everywhere. Try to intensify your aspiration to feel His presence constantly.

246. No need to be attentive to *Kundalini*

There is no need to be attentive to *Kundalini*. Your spiritual practice will itself take care of the *Kundalini* and raise her to the supreme heights. You may continue with your regular meditation for longer periods and try to keep that awareness even when you are moving about. The calmness and peace you experience while in meditation is an encouraging aspect. Carry on with your spiritual practice with more and more intensity.

247. How to follow the spiritual path

To follow the spiritual path one should have the aspiration to realise God. Next comes chanting of the Divine *Mantra*, *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* or any name of God even without formal initiation. As we go on practising like this, God will arrange for the initiation at the proper time either by taking the aspirant to the Guru or by taking the Guru to the aspirant.

What is needed for successful *Sadhana* is the constant remembrance of God. Try to maintain that. While chanting the Name, try to bring to your mind that you are chanting the Name of God who is all-pervading, who has manifested as the entire universe and who resides in everyone's hearts. This practice will purify your mind and enable you to dedicate all your actions to Him. You will also be able to feel that it is by His power that activities in your body as well as in other bodies are taking place and that the real doer is He.

248. The goal of life

The goal of one's life should be, to know about the *Atman* and to attain *Atma Sakshatkar* — God-realisation. For this, one has to do intense *Sadhana* as directed by the Guru. If you are intensely aspiring for God-realisation, it is better you approach a saint and get properly initiated. Our Gurudev has suggested

constant chanting of God's Name with full faith and devotion as a means to achieve the goal. This practice will gradually purify the mind and prepare it for higher experiences. All doubts will get cleared when we are sincerely pursuing our *Sadhana*.

249. *Saguna and Nirguna*

When you remember God in a particular form, you worship Him as *Saguna*, and when the image dissolves in your mind, raising you beyond the sense of duality, then you realize Him as *Nirguna*. Both are the aspects of one Truth.

250. Marriage — No bar to God-realisation

If you want to lead a worldly life, you may better get married. It is really tough to remain a bachelor amidst all types of temptations. Unless one is well established in the ultimate aim of God-realisation, there is every chance of succumbing to the temptations. So it is better to get married. Married life is no bar to God-realisation.

251. Embrace Infinity

In the course of *Sadhana*, a time comes when we feel like taking a leap into the sea instead of simply standing on the shore, looking at or touching the waters. This is like

breaking the small circle and embracing infinity. This leap places us entirely in the hands of God and means dedicating our life fully for the service of the Lord.

252. Desire is our worst enemy

Man's nature is the same whether it is in the East or the West. People forget the purpose for which they joined organisations and are carried away by the desire for power and pelf, the strong weapon of *Maya*. God must have brought about such situations only to make the disciples understand that spiritual attainment is not a joke and one has to give up all desires if one wants to progress. Desires are our worst enemy. They are so latent in us that we are made to feel that we are desireless, but some unguarded moments bring them out so forcefully that they cannot be resisted. God's grace alone can save us from such pitfalls and God unfailingly guides sincere aspirants.

253. Advice to elderly people

In the scheme of present day style of living, hardly anyone finds time to spend with their elders, though it is not done deliberately. The best way for the elderly people therefore is, to expect the least from the world, love all irrespective of their attitude and at the same

time spend as much time as possible in the remembrance of God.

Aging is a common phenomenon and it imposes limitation on our activities. If we steadfastly try to dwell on God-thought, we will not be subjected to any type of dejection. Weariness due to old age will be there but its impact, to a very great extent, will not be seriously felt if our mind is occupied in His remembrance.

254. Ignore people's criticism of saints

People form different opinions about saints with the aid of their limited intellect. They go on praising or criticizing without knowing what saints really are. So do not give too much importance to such criticisms. Carry on with your practice and try to remember God constantly. If you are sincere on the path, you will surely get guidance from within and you will know what to do next.

255. Assert when necessary

You have to assert whenever it is necessary and not allow yourself to be dictated by your colleagues for unjust causes. You should be able to deal with them calmly but, of course, without getting angry. If at all you get angry, for any reason, talk to them calmly later and ask for forgiveness.

256. Guru only gives the *Mantra*

You can take a horse to a river but you cannot make it drink. When you are feeding a child, a small quantity of food is put into the mouth but swallowing has to be done by the child. So also, the Guru gives the *Mantra* but the disciple has to chant it.

257. Get over pangs of separation

To get over the pangs arising out of attachments, one has to go beyond all names and forms. Such practice will enable you to develop the right relationship with all including parents, brothers, relatives and friends. And gradually you will not miss them at any time. For this, constant contemplation of the Reality, through chanting of His Name, will help.

258. To feel for lapses — the right step

The very fact that you feel sorry for the lapses on your part is itself a step towards progress. Till one gets rooted in God-thought, such so-called falls are common. So do not feel disheartened that you are unable to get over it.

259. To nullify ill-effects of our behaviour

To lose your temper often is not a good sign. You should try to develop a conscious effort to get over this weakness. Whenever you

fail in your attempt, go and offer *Namaskars* to that individual on whom you have lost temper. This practice will, to a very great extent, nullify the ill-effects of your behaviour and make your heart gradually pure.

You should have no ill-feeling towards anybody, much less your own kith and kin. You should be happy in giving and making available whatever you can for others. To make you strong enough to practise loving one and all unreservedly, the easiest way is to take refuge in the holy and all-powerful *Ram Nam* with all faith and devotion and pray to the Lord seated in your heart.

260. Chanting the name of the Guru

It is perfectly all right to chant the name of the Guru, as Guru and God are one. The only thing one has to bear in mind is that, while chanting the name of the Guru, one should have the proper *Bhava*, viz, that Guru stands for the Lord of the universe who is seated in the hearts of all and who has also taken the form of the Guru in the person.

261. Maintain love and harmony in the family

There must be love and harmony amongst all the members of your family,

whether they are staying together or separately. When the family grows, it may become necessary to find alternate accommodation but it should be done gracefully so that the bond of love is not disturbed. So, whatever arrangements are made — either to stay together or to have separate accommodation — maintain the love amongst yourselves.

262. On grief over death of a dear one

The hospitalisation of your father and later his shuffling off the mortal coil, thus freeing himself from the bondage of the old body and its aches and pains, are all natural developments with regard to everything that is born. So you should not grieve over it. He still exists but in a subtle body. Now he is not bound by the body and therefore can be anywhere and everywhere. Be sure he is at the lotus feet of our Beloved Papa and enjoying eternal peace and bliss. So you have no reason to grieve over his physical absence. The moment you think of him, he is with you, though with your physical eyes you cannot perceive him.

263. Convey spiritual message through drama

Try to make all your plays convey a

spiritual message so as to lift the actors and the audience ethically and spiritually and to inspire them with a keen aspiration to lead a fruitful life for the benefit of themselves and also for others. Dramas create such lasting impressions on young minds. So, ours is to see that they get the best. Such elevating dramas can be televised and they will prove to be a blessing to the children to counteract the ill-effects of the present-day TV programmes.

264. Everything is Divine

Spiritual practices are not different from the daily work. We have only to change our attitude towards the work. It is often repeated in our scriptures that everything is Divine. There is nothing but Divine. So our work is Divine. The persons we are working with are Divine. The materials we are handling are Divine. The power that makes us work is Divine. Our effort is only to be conscious of this while working. Then the work itself becomes worship. God who is the real doer will get done through us whatever is necessary to fulfil His will.

265. Prepare for higher experiences

Even when we are living with saints we can open ourselves to receive their grace only

to the extent we have progressed. We have to pass through certain situations and gradually prepare ourselves physically and mentally for higher experiences. We are now ready only to do so much and receive as much as we already have. The bud takes its own time to blossom into a flower. Ultimately it is He who through our so-called '*Sadhana*', removes the mask of ignorance put on by Himself. When the process is complete and the instrument is made fully pure and prepared, He will declare "I am He". Now the little 'I' that was claiming doership so far has disappeared. He alone 'is'.

266. Advice to an expectant mother

This is the time you have to be very careful for the sake of the child in regard to its physical and mental development. Please avoid going to cinemas and watching TV except devotional programmes. Read only devotional books dealing with the lives and teachings of saints. Keep chanting the holy *Ram Nam* as much as possible and thus keep the mind engaged in God-thought. Never entertain any ill-will towards anybody. If any such thought arises, immediately bring out counter-thoughts and mentally prostrate before the person concerned and pray for pardon. Take only *Sattwic* food avoiding spicy and hot foods. In short, try to be *Sattwic* in thought, word and

deed. You will be blessed with a child full of good qualities and devotion.

267. Spiritual attainment for eternal happiness

Early transformation in our life comes only as a result of our intense *Sadhana* in the previous life. The external contact of a saint, his blessings or reading something very striking is only an outside cause. If the inner preparation is not there, nothing from outside will work suddenly. If one had been doing *Sadhana* from many lives before, the net result of that *Sadhana* will manifest itself at the proper time.

You know fully well that however high may be one's material attainments, they are nothing compared to the spiritual attainments. Material attainments and positions die with the body, whereas spiritual attainments make us realise our immortality. Our material attainments, besides making us feel great financially and status-wise, will give us only relative happiness and will enable us to be of some service only to a few. Our spiritual attainments will give us eternal happiness and make us a blessing to humanity.

268. He causes events for the good of all

Though we may not know the how, why

and wherefore of events, one thing is sure — they are caused by Him only for the ultimate good of all. He will give us the right perspective to watch everything dispassionately and to make us see His finger in everything.

269. Commune with the “stillness”

Glad to know that Beloved Papa managed to cover up your long stay here against instructions from your Principal. Beloved Papa arranges everything in His own way. It is good that your desire to give up work and go away to a solitary place is no longer there and that you are able to accept cheerfully every situation Beloved Papa chooses to place you in. This is a definite gain and progress in your *Sadhana*. You can commune with the “stillness” at any time anywhere if you crave for it. May you be able to commune with the “stillness” — your own Being — constantly and be a witness to all the activities.

270. Writing the *Mantra*

There is absolutely nothing wrong with writing ‘OM’ many times. What is required is that while writing the *Mantra* or ‘OM’ one should be conscious that they symbolically represent the all-pervading, infinite Reality seated in everybody, which actuates everything.

271. *Sadhana* itself makes you joyous

Any *Sadhana* properly done should help us to be more and more cheerful, move with everybody with all love and affection and also be a source of joy for others.

272. Be child-like and not childish

Child-like innocence is a virtue whereas childishness stems from immaturity.

273. Assert your divinity

When you are tormented by pulls of the lower nature, cry to God to lift you up and give you only elevating thoughts. Side by side, assert your divinity and also feel that the tormenting thoughts are only on the surface and have nothing to do with your Self.

274. God protects only on total surrender

A *Bhakta* who has surrendered to God completely should not try to defend or protect himself. Then alone the Lord comes to the *Bhakta*'s rescue. This is shown clearly in the case of Draupadi who was holding fast to her sari and, at the same time, calling to Lord Krishna to come to her rescue. Krishna did not come to her rescue until she gave up her hold on the cloth and surrendered herself completely to Him.

275. Basic approach of a *Sadhaka*

When we are on the spiritual path, it is of no relevance to us how others are living or how they are making money etc. For a *Sadhaka*, what is important is to watch his own mind and keep it under control by making it dwell more and more on God in order to attain eternal happiness. The *Sadhaka* has to look at the world as the *Lila* (play) of God. God Himself has assumed different forms and He is playing different games. There is no need for us to probe further except to know that it is all His *Lila*.

276. Right attitude towards destiny

You should know that whatever you are destined to get, you will surely get and nobody can stop it. In the ordinary course your getting greatly upset over the promotion of one of your juniors to a higher post, ignoring you, is natural. But being a devotee of Beloved Papa and Mataji and a follower of their teachings, there is absolutely no reason for you to be upset. Accept the situation cheerfully and wish the person, who is promoted, all success and also congratulate him from the bottom of your heart.

You are sure to be rewarded, if you are able to develop this attitude: firstly, make your mind peaceful and happy by taking the bitterness away from your mind; secondly,

make the other person happy and thirdly, make your superiors appreciate your attitude, thus paving the way for your promotion. Be sure that all these will happen, though not immediately, as it will surely take some time for you to really accept the situation and thus make your mind perfectly pure.

277. Accept the world as it is

When you look at the world, try to bring to your mind that it is the play of the Lord. Behind the apparent happiness and misery, there is the all-pervading Truth, unaffected by what happens externally. The so-called misery and joy belong to the surface, but deep within, there is the unaffected Witness. Try to bring your mind to accept this truth and train it until it fully accepts and gets used to it. As a wise man has put it: "Nothing is wrong with the world and nothing needs correction. What we have to do is only to change our attitude towards it".

278. Work is His worship

Any work that we do is His worship; because, every bit of our activity belongs to His *Prakriti* or will. So let us do all work as service, or as an offering to Him — the supreme Lord. In other words, our service, whatever form it takes, for whomsoever it is

done, is always rendered to God only. You have been provided with opportunities to render loving service at the hospital to take care of the elderly and others there. Make the best use of it.

As one saint of Karnataka sang: "When you fondle children, take them to be Krishna; when you are engaged in the kitchen, think of Him; when you are doing your daily ablutions, sing His glories. etc." Thus in all your activities, if you keep Him in your mind, that itself will become your greatest *Sadhana*.

279. Glimpse of God-realisation

Beloved Papa, the Lord of the universe, alone has to give the glimpse, rather the taste of Realisation. Of course, He gives us the taste of the peace and bliss of the Eternal for short moments, when our mind gets one-pointed and absolutely free from all worldly desires and enjoys communion with God. We have only to make that experience stay with us permanently by sustained *Sadhana*.

280. After God-realisation

After one's attainment of God-realisation there is no need for *Sadhana*. Whatever you see, you see only God in that form. You dwell in the consciousness that the Guru is all-pervading and you come to regard

the world phenomenon as the *Lila* of the Guru. You will then be swimming in eternal, ineffable bliss and peace.

281. Initiation by Guru's representative

Every Master has a different way of initiation. If the particular path to which you have been initiated has helped you, you may stick to it. Otherwise, you have the liberty to choose another path, after making sure that you have done your best to find success in your present path. You can also meet the successor to your Master and get his personal guidance. If you are progressing, you should feel the progress by the purity of mind, the peace and happiness you get and your reactions to the happenings outside etc. These are all matters you can judge for yourself. Keep up the faith and allow it to grow strong. You may depend upon it, by the grace of the Guru, all will go well with you.

282. Different methods of concentration during *Nama Japa*

When chanting the Name, there are different methods for attaining concentration. Beloved Papa used to concentrate on the sound of the Name itself and was enjoying the bliss of *Ram Nam*. Some others, who want some form to concentrate upon, have the form of the *Ishta*

Devata before their mental vision or keep a picture in front of them and concentrate on that. Some others, while chanting the Name, keep their mind on God as the all-pervading, Nameless, Formless, Absolute Existence that has manifested as the entire universe and is seated in everybody's heart. You are free to choose any of these methods and follow it. Ultimately, the mind has to be taken beyond all names and forms to rest on the Absolute Existence. Since you need some form, you may choose to concentrate upon the form of your Guru or *Ishta Devata* and meditate on the same.

What is important is to maintain God-remembrance. If you are able to achieve that without sitting and doing *Bhajans*, it is perfectly all right. In fact singing and chanting are eventually to lead one to silent meditation.

One may get Visions when the mind is attuned to God and is in *Sattwa Guna*, whereas hallucination is the product of a disturbed mind.

283. Control of temper — by chanting *Ram Nam*

Chanting of the holy *Ram Nam* constantly, remembering Him ceaselessly, is the only way to get over the '*shadripus*' (six enemies). Chanting of the holy Name is like keeping a lamp burning in the room without

permitting darkness to get in. The moment light is extinguished darkness overpowers. So, you have to keep the lamp of *Ram Nam* burning constantly in order to free yourself from attacks of the *shadripus*.

Besides chanting of the holy *Ram Nam*, pray to the *Sadguru* seated in your heart to free you from your sudden fits of anger. Also try to train your mind to look upon everyone in your house, and outside, as different forms of Beloved Papa and, as such, deserving of your love and respect, and not shouts. If you follow this practice, you are sure to overcome your temper and be able to remain cool and calm even in the most trying circumstances. Not only that, one and all will love you, and you will be spreading harmony and peace wherever you are.

284. Saint awakens the ignorant ones

A *Siddha* or a saint is one who has successfully completed his *Sadhana* by realising his oneness with God. He is established in the consciousness that he and God are one and whatever is done by him is done by God. He says he is the all-pervading Reality and his form is the universe. His individuality is dissolved in God, like a drop merging in the ocean and becoming the ocean itself. God works through that saint, his chosen instrument, to awaken the ignorant

ones to the Reality and to guide them on the path.

285. *Sadhana* and worldly life

We know it is very difficult to do *Sadhana*, living the worldly life. Though it is difficult it is not impossible. The saints, whom we have come in contact with, have been dinning into our ears that life lived for any other purpose is lived in vain. It should be only for the attainment of God, and Self-realisation should be our only goal.

In spite of all this, in spite of hearing again and again, we have been going only in the old way. We all know very well that the downward pull, i.e., attraction to name and form, is so strong that it takes us away from the path. We sometimes stray away from the path and we even forget the path for a while. We must try to give more importance to the attainment of the supreme goal — to reach God — than to anything else. Anything else worldly is not going to give us real happiness. All this we know fully well. In spite of it, we are not striving for the supreme goal.

It is a great blessing to us that saints from different parts of India give us the benefit of *Satsang*. They talk to us about *Bhakti*, God-realisation, devotion to the Guru, and devotion to God. Any amount of hearing is not sufficient.

It must be hammered into our mind again and again, which will surely help us to progress fast in our *Sadhana*. The more we hear the better for us. Listen to all the saints and make the best use of their talks for our progress. We should strive for only God-realisation. Try to maintain His remembrance all the 24 hours without break and everything else will follow. May Beloved Papa and Mataji bless everyone with the supreme devotion and grant the experience of the highest Truth leading to eternal happiness

PART II

Messages and articles of Pujya Swamiji:

286. Evaluate progress in *Sadhana* on birthdays

Birthdays come round every year. Every birthday reminds us that we have lived one more year and have gathered experiences, which could have made us richer and wiser. But seldom do we make good use of these experiences to enrich our lives. Mostly many events are forgotten except a few that have left deep impressions. Yet, if we try to evaluate the experiences that we still remember, we will be able to make out what we have gained. It will be worth our while, on each birthday, to take our mind back to the year that has rolled by and compare the state of mind then with what it is now.

These questions we can ask ourselves:

- ♦ Is the pull of the lower nature less strong?
- ♦ Has our ego become less assertive?
- ♦ Is there sincere regret for having hurt the feelings of others?
- ♦ Are we less critical of men and things?
- ♦ Are we able to give love for hate and anger?
- ♦ Are we able to forgive others for their trespasses?
- ♦ Is the aspiration to realise God becoming

stronger and more intense?

- ◆ Is the devotion to God increasing?
- ◆ Has our mind expanded so much as to enable many more to be the recipients of our love and service?
- ◆ Are we able to give happiness to more and more persons?
- ◆ Have we become more humble?
- ◆ Are we able to appreciate better the good done by others?
- ◆ Are we able to submit to God's will easily?

Many such questions can be asked about ourselves to find out where exactly we now stand, compared to the previous year.

As one year is a long period and many things said and done are likely to be forgotten, *Sadhakas* had better evaluate their day's performance every night before they go to bed so that they will be able to do better the next day.

While in *Sadhana* we are liable to commit mistakes, in thought, word and deed that hinder our progress and take us away from God. Instead of correcting ourselves we continue to commit mistakes and thereby slip down. Every day we have to deal with many persons of different characters. Some of them may be pleasant to deal with, some neutral and some very irritating.

Our success lies in dealing with them

all with love, with no tinge of irritation, whatever may be their behaviour. In this we unfortunately fail often. But if we understand where and why we have failed we will be able to do better the next day so that we may instead of slipping down, progress fast in *Sadhana*. Every day is a day of examination for us and we have to judge ourselves. The Lord is ever watching over us.

People come to us with problems in a depressed state of mind. It is for us to understand them and help them to regain their composure and return home with a better frame of mind. Instead, if we ourselves lose our balance, we will be creating only confusion, which means doing great disservice to others and ourselves.

Why are we committing such mistakes? And how can we avoid them? It is definitely not by brooding over or by thinking of the mistakes committed. The reason for the mistakes is often slackness in our *Sadhana*. We can be sure that mistakes will not creep into our thoughts, talks and actions when we have God-remembrance. God-remembrance is like a light burning within us. So we must keep the light of God-remembrance aflame in us constantly during our waking hours so that we are not prompted to do anything wrong and whatever we do, say or think, will be conducive

to our spiritual progress, and to the lasting benefit of others.

God-remembrance is like a guard that keeps us away from mistakes. It is the light that keeps the darkness of ignorance away. It is the power that keeps fear and sorrow away. It is the way to keep God with us.

287. *Samsaric* life and *Adhyatmic* life not separate

You have all come here today because you are interested in spiritual life. That also shows you have understood the futility of merely running after the transitory worldly pleasures. You must also have tasted the sweetness of the spiritual life. By sweetness I mean the unearthly peace you enjoy the moment you take to it. But the paradox is that in spite of having experienced this unearthly peace, we are not able to stick to it, i.e. take to it whole-heartedly.

In other words, we are now having our legs in two boats, viz., the *Samsaric* — worldly boat — and the *Adhyatmic* — spiritual boat. It may be all right for sometime but ultimately we have to keep both our legs in one boat or make the two boats into one by placing two planks and tying them together, meaning, instead of rejecting the worldly life in favour of the *Adhyatmic* life, we should be able to divinise

the worldly life. In other words **there will be no difference between the *Adhyatmic* life and worldly life**. When two boats are tied together, it can carry more passengers and more weight. It may appear to be difficult in the beginning but is certainly possible if efforts are put forth with earnestness and perseverance.

When we think of the spiritual life most of us feel that if we become too spiritual, our worldly life may suffer. At the same time we don't worry if we are too worldly, and our spiritual life suffers. We have to treat both these as one, so that there will be no suffering at all. So, what is to be done is to entirely divinise the life. In fact, everything is Divine. We only do not feel it — we do not understand it — we do not look at it that way. There is nothing but the Divine.

As the great masters have been telling us, there is only *Brahman* and nothing but *Brahman*. But we have been seeing diversity. We have been seeing things differently. We have been feeling that we are not Divine, we are individuals and consider others also as individuals. Having full faith in the words of our masters that everything is Divine and nothing but Divine, if we go forward with intense *Sadhana*, we will be able to reach the goal very fast without disturbing the so-called worldly life.

From the very beginning of our *Sadhana*, our life will be very blissful. We have only to remember our divinity. We are not merely the body, mind, intellect or senses. We are *Atman* only in reality. If we accept this, naturally, we have also to accept that everyone we meet, everything we see, is also not merely the body but the *Atman* itself. So, the *Atman* sees the *Atman* — the *Atman* deals with the *Atman*. This consciousness has to be maintained. This is possible if we sincerely try for it.

All saints say and have proved that by taking to the chanting of God's Name one will be able to feel the divinity in everybody. This is not clear to us at present, only because our mind which has been accumulating a lot of dirt by way of desires, *vasanas*, likes, dislikes etc. cannot see the Divine in ourselves or in anybody else. The chanting of God's name gradually and surely removes the dirt, layer by layer, and makes the mind pure. As a result, that 'something' that was making us feel 'not Divine', is removed. Then we will be able to feel our Divinity.

So chanting of God's name is one of the ways for that. There are many other ways also. But let us confine ourselves to the path of devotion. While chanting the Name we should also feel that we are chanting the Name symbolising the supreme Being who is

Absolute Existence - Consciousness - Bliss and who has manifested as the universe with innumerable names and forms and is seated in our own hearts. This practice will take away our sense of individuality, as we then become conscious of only one existence — the Absolute Existence — universal Existence.

While carrying on with our daily activities, we will, with the said sense of universal Existence, come to feel that we are serving the Divine only. In other words, whatever objects we may see or handle we should be conscious that each of them is Divine by itself. If you are touching a person, if you are serving a person, feel that he is Divine. You will be then doing the service in a perfect way. That will be real worship. Such practice, *seva*, will add to the power of chanting God's name i.e. *Japa*.

When we do such service there will be absolutely no difference in our attitude, whether we wash a lavatory or clean a stinking ulcer of an old patient or do some other work, because our feeling will be that we are only serving the Divine in those forms — the stink of the lavatory or the sick will not affect us at all, because we are serving God in those forms. Ultimately we will reach the stage where even those services or any other work we do becomes worship of God Himself.

We may prefer to worship God in the *Puja* room in the images or in the photographs or idols, light a lamp, or chant some *Mantras* and offer flowers, *Naivedya* etc. When these things are done without the right attitude or without the feeling that we are worshipping the Divine — all-pervading, Absolute Existence, Consciousness and Bliss — we are not going to gain much. Whereas, when we do any type of work, be it cleaning or attending on a patient, with the full feeling that we are serving God, that will be real worship.

So when we divinise everything, we will be doing all our actions as worship to the Lord. Those who are on the spiritual path are *Sadhakas* for all the twenty-four hours. They cannot say that they are *Sadhakas* for sometime or only when they are in the *Puja* room and not outside. All the time we must be dedicated to God. This is possible for everyone. So there is no clash between spiritual life and worldly life. Both must go hand in hand. Both are really one.

Let us pray to the supreme Lord seated in our hearts to give us the right attitude to be conscious of our divinity, to see divinity in others and to progress on the spiritual path so that we may get established in the Truth and enjoy eternal happiness.

288. Treat oneself as a research station.

I am very happy to see that this is called a Research Centre. It can be more clearly called Spiritual Research Centre or *Adhyatmic* Research Centre. Those who are seeking God — who are in search of the higher values of life and who are trying to find out the way to do it quickly, come to such a Centre. But they can take real advantage of it only if each one makes himself a research station. In fact all the aspirants are research stations.

What are we doing research for? We have to do research in regard to how to keep the mind under control; how to purify the mind; how to lift ourselves from the lower nature; how to develop Divine qualities; how to develop our devotion to God and ultimately how to make a beginning in such a way as to make it possible to dedicate our entire life to God and live such a dedicated life till we reach our goal which is God-realization.

May this Centre make many such research stations and help them to reach the Supreme Goal. It is out of intense research done by our *Rishis* — sages and saints — ages ago that we have been blessed with the *Upanishads*, *Brahmasutras*, *Bhagavad Gita* and other scriptures. The effect of their research is invaluable to us. But the one thing we should not forget is that unlike the research on

worldly things, unlike the inventions of worldly things, we cannot make use of this just like purchasing something from the bazaar.

Many things have been invented by research. Electricity was invented. Electricity is easily available for every one now. Many many things have been invented and we can get the benefit of all of them by paying for them. But this invention, out of research into one's own self, cannot be purchased by us. We have to do the research ourselves. Though we have been shown the way, we have to walk the way, we have to do hard work, do the research ourselves and finally reach the goal. May Bhagawan Ramana's and all the *Mahatmas*' blessings be upon you all for such an attainment.

289. Shift priority in life to know our real goal

Blessed indeed are devotees who are chosen by God to reveal Himself sooner or later. The very fact that a person has started walking on the path of devotion or any path leading to Realisation, shows that God has showered His grace on him and that He has selected him to reveal Himself in his heart. This being the case, we can consider that all those who have assembled here are really blessed. Once a devotee takes to the path

leading to God- realisation, naturally he comes in contact with a *Mahatma*, gets His blessings and guidance as is the case of you all who have been blessed with the *Satsang* of many saints like Param Pujya Anandashram Swamiji, Param Pujya Parijnanashram Swamiji and some of you might have even had the *darshan* of Param Pujya Pandurangashram Swamiji apart from that of Beloved Papa, Beloved Mataji and many other saints.

We very well know that all these saints struggled very hard to realise the supreme goal of human life and, even after attaining the goal, they continued to strive to awaken the slumbering souls to the Reality. They have done their part. Now, on our side, we have to work hard to attain the goal shown by them. Though we all know how they all had to struggle very hard, most of us are, unfortunately, taking it very easy, thinking that we can also reach the goal soon without serious struggle. Of course we all will reach the goal some day but not unless we work very hard for it. They are not asking us to do something impossible. They tell us that it is enough if we have intense devotion and fiery aspiration to reach God. For that, through books and oral advice they ask us to take God's Name constantly. '**Constantly**' is a word we have to underline. Only by chanting God's

Name constantly, we will be able to remember Him ceaselessly.

We are not giving so much importance to the word 'constantly'. Once we are able to remember Him constantly we can be sure that we have reached a higher stage. We must practise daily, say right from morning to bedtime, to remember Him in every incident. Whenever our eyes fall upon anything — a person, an animal, a creature or anything — we must identify it with God. We must also accept all events or happenings as willed by God. Thus we can be in communion with Him all the twenty-four hours of the day. This is what the saints have been teaching us. But, unfortunately, we have not been giving importance to this particular aspect of their teaching.

We feel we are taking God's Name and are trying to see God in everything and all that but actually when it comes to practice, we miss it many times. It is natural because the worldly pull is so strong that it takes us away from God-remembrance. We may be thinking of God. We may be trying to see God in others, but the strong pull from the world makes us forget God for a long time. So the struggle goes on.

Perseverance is necessary on the spiritual path. When we are seriously trying

to realise God there should not be anything standing in the way. Our devotion must be one-pointed. That does not mean we should give up our job, renounce our properties, our home and family. We can have all those things and live in the midst of them, but our attitude towards them should change. By maintaining God-remembrance always we must be able to identify all the family members with God, and accept anything that happens as happening by God's will only. If this attitude is maintained, we can stay in the family, we can carry on our profession as before. Our main aim must be to realise God.

We may say that we are striving to realise God, and that we have no ambition or attachment in the world. But, when suddenly something amiss happens in the family, we are shocked so much that we even blame God for what has happened, instead of surrendering to God's will and remaining happy and peaceful. This practice of developing an attitude of surrender must go on ceaselessly. It is a great struggle in the beginning but by practice it will become easy and we will be able to lead a very blissful life. The final attainment may be far away, it doesn't matter. But this practice itself will keep us in bliss and peace always. It will remove all the tension we have in life. It will solve all the

problems in life.

There should be no other ambition for you in your life except to realise Him. Make this decision strong and work only for that. Don't be afraid that by doing this you will be losing other things. Whatever you lose may be only of the world. Worldly things are perishable. This fact you know well. Even then you are not able to accept it. When some material loss takes place you are very much affected. You are not able to accept it or submit to God's will. This is because you have not given importance to God-realisation, though you may say that your aim is God-realization.

You are giving importance to worldly things — worldly attainments, worldly losses, or worldly gains. In the case of a *Sadhaka*, many pleasant or unpleasant things may happen. But he will remain unruffled because he knows that worldly losses and gains do not matter at all, as his goal is God-realisation and God alone does everything in different forms. He may lose his position, he may lose his property, he may lose friends, he may lose so many other things. But he will not mind them at all because his mind is with God. He is fully confident that God is taking care of him and his task is only to remember Him constantly.

So, try to remember God as much as

possible. When you go to bed you can feel you are sleeping in the lap of God, the supreme Mother and when you get up feel that you are a child waking up from the lap of the Mother. So God-remembrance will continue both during your sleep and waking hours. You thus identify everything with God, all incidents with God's will and thus remain happy and peaceful in all conditions and circumstances. Realisation will come automatically. You don't have to work specially for it. This practice itself is sufficient. May our great Gurus bless you all with success in such experience and lead you to the supreme goal.

290. To the youth

The youth of today, who are the future citizens of India, are in a very important stage in their life. It is very enviable because it is a life free from all cares and worries. This is the period when they should prepare themselves to plunge into the stormy sea of life. Swimming across it will demand a lot of strength and courage but it will give them varied experiences. If they prepare themselves well from now on, they will find the future life smooth-sailing. They must now utilize all their energy and time in acquiring knowledge, in moulding their character and in doing whatever is necessary to equip themselves for

the roles they will have to play as citizens of our great country.

They should lead a strictly moral life and also help others to do the same. They must realise that the life they see in front of them is not everything. Behind all that, there is a Power, which is supreme, that is responsible for the creation and preservation of the universe. So they must be devoted to that Supreme Power, by whatever Name they may call it. Constant remembrance of and devotion to that Power will give strength and courage to square up to the battle of life with equanimity and that Power will lead them all on the right path at all times.

At the moment they must not divert their attention and energy towards anything other than their studies and the development of their character. Let them keep away from politics and politicians till their studies are over. Let the politicians and others take care of the country. When the time comes, i.e. when they have completed their studies, they can choose their career and express their views without fear or favour.

Respect for the teachers and elders is a 'must.' They may thus earn their blessings, which will go a long way in moulding their life beautifully.

They are all engaged in studies for

acquiring knowledge of the things of the world so as to lead a happy life. They must have by now understood that besides what they learn from the books and teachers, the world is a greater teacher and, if only they are vigilant, they can learn a lot by observing what is going on in front of them.

The knowledge that one acquires from schools and colleges, though necessary, is not sufficient as it relates only to the things of the world, which are naturally transitory. So whatever knowledge one gains of this world, however deep or subtle it may be, is not real knowledge, in the sense that it cannot help to know the "REALITY". That knowledge cannot give lasting happiness.

In addition to what the books and teachers can teach, they must be observant to what is happening in the world and learn many things from it. They are all budding blossoms in the garden of God. They must blossom into fragrant and beautiful flowers and become sweet fruits so that their presence itself will radiate the fragrance and sweetness of love emanating from them and thus become a blessing to humanity.

Generally speaking, persons endowed with capacity to investigate the truth of things lift themselves from the evils of instinctive life by their own discriminative power. They need

no teacher for this. When even all lower creatures are, to some extent, capable of looking after their own welfare, man who is endowed with intelligence and discriminative power can surely learn a lot from daily life. By observation and inference he should be able to understand what contributes to his ultimate good.

So let the youth concentrate on their studies, lead a strictly moral life, be devoted to God, have reverence for the teachers and elders, love their fellow students as their own brothers and sisters and be a blessing to humanity and thus develop themselves into real and useful citizens of the country and make the country a veritable heaven on earth by their selfless and loving service.

291. Expand your Love-circle

When we are engaged in Divine service, we have to remember that our petty prejudices, likes and dislikes of persons etc. have to be sacrificed for achieving the common goal. Such a sacrifice will help achieve not only the common goal, but also will help purify our mind and prepare us for a nobler and higher life. We all must feel that we are brothers and accept everybody as ours and thus leave nobody out of our Love-circle. This qualifies us to become His dear devotees. The Lord says in

the *Bhagavad Gita*, “Such *Bhaktas* are dear to Me”. Let us become His dear ones and earn His choicest blessings.

If every one maintains a broad and noble outlook, it is certain that Hindustan will be a veritable Heaven on earth. Keep constant remembrance of God. This practice will enable you to realize the truth that we are all children of God and therefore brothers and sisters. This feeling will maintain our unity intact, based on the understanding that we are one family.

May the Lord bless you all with a pure mind and broad heart so that you may be able to think in terms of the progress and welfare of the entire nation and then bring in prosperity and peace to one and all.

292. Disseminate universality of religion

Though the theme of all religions is to lead mankind to peace and happiness, in the name of religion itself fights are going on, keeping peace far, far away. The main reason for the occurrence of religious feuds is that religion is not properly understood nor properly taught. Every one must understand what true religion is, know one's own religion better, appreciate other religions as well and offer them the due reverence and respect. Our Master Swami Ramdas, after he got the universal vision, anxious to bring about unity

among all religions, wrote many articles at different times and spoke also in different places and tried his best to make people understand what true religion is. A few of his writings are collected and published in a booklet titled "Religion — its Universality".

A higher standard of life and a better standard of living — are both necessary for the welfare of society. While the norms of the former are drawn from spiritual science — religion, which deals with moral/ethical values, those of the latter come from the material science which is taught through educational institutions. A harmonious blend of the two ensures a well-ordered society. The present-day education as well as the style of living gives scant regard to the former and undue importance to the latter, even at the expense of the former. This imbalance has resulted in the erosion of values and the present-day malady causing disharmony, unrest and chaos in the lives of the majority of the people. The appalling condition that we are presently in, calls for a serious effort to restore the due role of religion in our life here. A three-way approach may be attempted:

One is, to include in the curriculum of studies the basic tenets of religion with particular reference to its universality. This will help to raise a disciplined society based

on character so as to have peaceful co-existence of different faiths and cults. The second avenue is, to propagate the cardinal values enshrined in all religious faiths, at the same time identifying the commonness inherent in all such faiths. The press, libraries and other media agencies can take up this noble work. The third is, through social organisations, religious and charitable institutions and political parties. Here they can demonstrate how such a new vision can spread peace and joy to all irrespective of the faith or cult in which one is born.

In this noble task, the role of the Government is enormous, viz., initiating movements in this direction, supporting and encouraging various forums for propagating the true perspective of religion, providing infrastructure wherever necessary for the fulfilment of the objective, etc.

All of you must take up a significant role in this NOBLE MISSION of restoring the dignity and glory of mankind which is a precious gift of God.

293. Best type of worship of the Guru

During our *Sadhana*, if Guru's physical form is not easily available for us to do *Puja*, we have to be satisfied with doing *Puja* to his portrait. The next step will be to see His form

within us and mentally do all that we were doing outside, that is, make him sit in our heart, wash his feet, apply sandal paste, flowers and pray to Him. All these can be done mentally any number of times a day. H e r e we give importance to the physical body of the Guru.

By close association with the Guru, we come to realize that Guru is not merely the body but, being God Himself, He is all pervading. And as all pervading he is the entire manifestation and seated in every atom of the manifestation. So when we advance in our *Sadhana*, we do not limit our worship to a particular body. We worship Him in the entire manifestation. Whatever we see before us is the form of our Guru. He is the form as well as the force within that form — the force that activates that form. We must be able to maintain this consciousness. That will be the best type of worship of the Guru which will lead us ultimately to the perfect purification of our mind and ultimate merger in His universal existence..

God is nameless, formless, attributeless, eternal Existence. What is His form? Some may say His form is Lord Krishna's form or Lord Rama's form or Lord Jesus' form etc. They are all avataric forms. But the *Saguna* aspect of God is the entire universe.

Whatever we see before us is His manifestation.

This is the effort of all *Sadhakas*. When this is attained, they are no longer *Sadhakas*. They become *Siddhas*. They become one with the Guru — one with the Guru's universal existence. This is what we must all try for and pray for Beloved Papa's blessings on us. May Beloved Papa bless all of us so that we may attain this universal vision and enjoy eternal happiness.

294. Importance of Guru Purnima

Sadhakas are those who have imposed upon themselves some discipline in life and engage in some practice to control their mind so as to purify it and free it from the vision of diversity that has been the cause of misery in life. All *Sadhakas* on this day — GURU PURNIMA — invoke the blessings of the *Adi Guru* and all *Mahatmas* and renew their dedication to the Supreme Being for the sole purpose of realizing their oneness with IT. So let us all first pay homage to all the saints and sages and also to our Guru, not forgetting that they are all forms of the ONE whom we are seeking.

All of us in this world, whether we call ourselves *Sadhakas* or not, are moving towards the Supreme ONE, the source of all, and are

sure to reach the goal sooner or later, consciously or unconsciously. *Sadhakas* have understood by experience the urgency to gain a wider vision, extending beyond the visible universe and reach the source soon. Even among the *Sadhakas* some choose to walk slowly, some run fast and a few travel faster. Naturally, the fastest reaches the goal first. The beauty here is that this is not a travel outside. Our goal is not far away from us. We are THAT. The so-called travel is only a process of removing that which makes us feel that we are not THAT.

This process begins with the search for the Truth after the awakening, by the grace of God. Next comes the contact, with a realized soul — our Guru — who is none other than the Lord Himself, who wakes us up to the Reality. So, Guru's grace is in the beginning of our search, and Guru is the ultimate goal in whom we merge our individuality and in whom we realize our oneness.

Guru is the Absolute all-pervading Reality, and the entire manifestation, i.e. the Guru is everything and beyond everything. Those who are awakened and have come in contact with a saint — the Guru — are taught the way to see Him, the real Guru, within. Here begins the *Sadhana* as per the Guru's guidance. Our spiritual progress will depend

upon the intensity of our aspiration to realize the Truth. Whatever way is shown to us by the Guru, ours is to unquestioningly follow. Have full faith in the Guru. By completely surrendering to the Guru we will be able to progress on the path. For this we have to give up all our petty notions, our attainments and qualifications, our positions, our likes and dislikes, and anything that stands in the way of perfect surrender. The moment we develop such an attitude by our self-effacement, we are sure to be rewarded — rewarded with the highest — merger in the Eternal being of the Guru. He takes us unto Himself.

Let us whole-heartedly love the Guru; let us worship Him; let us see Him as everything and beyond everything; let us take Him as our only refuge; let us give our heart and soul to Him and ultimately lose ourselves in Him as a dew drop in the ocean.

Many *Sadhakas* observe *Chathurmasya Vratha* for four months beginning from *Guru Purnima* day, for intense *Sadhana*. Now it is not done in the traditional way but all the same, more time can be spent during this period for the *Sadhana* in the most befitting manner.

Chanting God's name — the *Ram Mantra* given to us — should be supplemented with reading of *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* daily at least a chapter during the *Chaturmasya* period — not to

merely read it but we must also study it properly. If one chapter is read daily it will help them.

295. Reply to birthday felicitation

Everyone is tickled to some extent by praises, but when it goes too far, it becomes uncomfortable. It is said that love sees no faults. Such love should be extended to all by all. Everyone should be looked upon not merely as a person, but God Himself. That is the right vision one should develop. The more we try the more joy we get. By loving one person, we get great joy and if we are able to love all, we get infinite joy. In the same way, to be loved by one is a great joy and to be loved by all gives us immense joy. It is all a play of love and joy. By striving to get that vision and by ultimately attaining it, we will be raising ourselves to God-hood.

True love means loving another, feeling oneness with him. The other may apparently be different but we are really one. In fact, the whole universe is a single unit of the *Saguna Swarupa* of our Beloved Papa who Himself is the substratum for the manifestation. We are all one, belonging to the universal body of our Beloved Papa. When we stand apart from that universal manifestation and look upon all as His innumerable and different forms it will give us great joy and to go on loving that way

is the best thing that we can do.

We don't have to speak anything, we don't have to thank anybody for anything, because our dealings are only with our Beloved Papa. What we should do is, whenever we see others, we should put our head at the feet of others mentally and salute them because they are all the embodiments of Beloved Papa Himself.

296. Translate the teachings of the Mahatmas into the work-day life

The utterances of saints are not merely to be studied but also to be practised. Even if we try to put into practice one or two lines of their teachings that will take us to the supreme heights of realisation. Unfortunately we just hear and forget. But from now onwards, let us try to put them into practice.

Many people feel that by merely staying in the company of saints they can advance on the spiritual path. That is not correct. When they live with a saint they must understand what the saint stands for and do intense *Sadhana* so that every minute is made use of in the best possible way. Otherwise the life of such a one is only wasted.

The very meaning of God-realisation is, the transformation of the individual into the universal. As individuals, we are in a small circle. Unless we also aspire to break the small

circle so as to embrace the universe, we will not be able to gain anything. The very purpose of *Sadhana* is not served. So we must try for expansion of the vision and practise it from the very beginning. Many people feel that doing the daily duties is different from spiritual practices. That is not at all correct. Whatever you do, can be turned into *Sadhana*, if you have the right attitude towards the action. The right attitude comes only when you have constant remembrance of God.

When you are engaged in activities you must have the background of God remembrance and then when you work you must feel that you are serving God through those forms. If that is done, any work you do becomes worship. Everybody can do this at any time. This must be your practice and by this you will be doing *Sadhana* all the time, nay, you will always be engaged in *Sadhana* only. May Beloved Papa bless you all with strength and courage to do *Sadhana* intensely and reach His eternal being and existence resulting in eternal happiness!

297. On sense of doership.

What a *Sadhaka* has to do is to eliminate the ego — the sense of doership. When everything is looked upon as God Himself, and every act is looked upon as the act of God

Himself, there is no place for us to say that 'I have done this' or 'I am going to do that' or 'he has done this' or 'he is going to do that'. There is then no 'I' nor 'he' but God alone is. We have to develop this attitude in our day to day life. It may appear to be simple but not so when we try to put it into practice. At the same time it is not too difficult also if we have the mind to do it. Be sure it will be successful if we are steadfast in our pursuit.

The main requisite for this practice is the constant remembrance of God and for that, our Beloved Papa has given us the holy and all-powerful *Ram Nam*. If we keep on chanting the Name as much as possible we will be able to maintain continuous remembrance of God. That will help us to see everything as Divine. While in this process, it is not that we are going to do anything new except changing our attitude towards everything i.e., when we see others, instead of seeing them as individuals, we will start looking at them as manifestations of our Beloved Ram. We will be full of love and affection for them and that love will be pure love because it is not based on body-consciousness but on the vision of the Divine in each person, which is the right vision. By this practice all our activities will be divinised and therefore will not bind us. So let us try to develop this attitude.

Many people feel that it is very difficult to tread on the spiritual path. The beauty of this path of devotion is that one will find the practice itself blissful like a child walking, with the mother holding its hand — so blissful and so carefree.

298. On Ramalinga Swami (Vallalar)

Blessed are those in whom God has revealed Himself by shuffling off the mask of ignorance He has put on Himself to play the part in this world-*Lila* as an individual. We call them saints and worship them as God. Theirs is a transformation from the human to the Divine. Having realized their divinity, they serve humanity in every positive way to awaken the Divine in them and help them in their *Sadhana* to realize their true being and existence — in short, to help them get the same experience they themselves got. Their sphere of activity and the amount of help rendered will depend upon how much God wills to get things done through them as His chosen instruments. These saints are a great blessing to humanity, as, without them the world would be groping in darkness. Even after their physical departure from the world, they continue to guide earnest aspirants in their own way.

For all external purposes many saints

live like ordinary human beings with the only difference that they are full of love and compassion, they treat everybody equally and they are a source of strength to those who depend upon them because of their inner transformation and universal vision. They live blissfully giving happiness to all, showing the way to eternal happiness. When they have fulfilled their mission they drop the body in the natural way. There are a few among them like Saint Jnaneshwar and Raghavendra Swami who entered *Jiva Samadhi*. (They chose to sit in meditation in a chamber and asked their disciples to close the same). Very rarely we hear about saints dematerializing their body like Nandanar at Chidambaram and Saint Mira at Dwaraka when they stood before the idols of their Lords in the temples. We had also heard from Pujya Mataji Krishnabai about her ancestor Saint Appayya Samarth who dematerialised his body in Bhatkal, North Kanara.

An addition to the galaxy of such saints is Vallalar, Ramalinga Swamikal who made his body deathless and dematerialized it at Vadalur in 1874. Before this happened, the revered Swami told his disciples, "I am in this body. Henceforth I would enter into all bodies and all over the country for the benefit of all beings."

Accordingly, the Swami has been actively helping the *Sadhakas* by appearing before them in his luminous body and also shown indications of establishing his grace, light and power in some places and persons.

The holy Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram has also acknowledged the presence of this grace-light in the Ashram during her conversation with a devotee of the Swami. How the Swami is influencing people and how earnestly he is working to bring about a transformation in their lives and also to help them even to make their body deathless are the points on which researches have been conducted by the Swami's devotees.

Inscrutable are the ways of saints. May they continue to shower their grace on all and make the world a better place to live in and make the individuals realize their true being and Existence.

299. Choice is ours.

The teachings of Beloved Papa give clear hints as to the object of human birth and how we can really make the best use of human life. When we are born we are blessed with freedom to do things as we like, meaning, unlike the animals and other creatures we are blessed with the intellect which can discriminate what is good and what is bad,

decide to do good or bad and enjoy or suffer the consequences. We have the full liberty and we should not complain that any one else is responsible for our actions. We ourselves are responsible. We can choose to do good things and elevate ourselves and reach the state of divinity and enjoy eternal happiness. On the other hand, we can choose to degrade ourselves by our actions, sink lower and lower and reach the state of animals — thus make our lives miserable. God has given us this choice.

Now as we have all come in contact with our revered Gurudev Beloved Papa we have been shown the right path, we have been told how we can raise ourselves to higher realms, so as to reach the state of divinity, to realise our divinity and enjoy eternal happiness. Let us not forget that to lead a real life Beloved Papa was emphasising on the need first to have a desire to understand the higher values of life and then an intense aspiration to lead such a life. For that he has given us the all-powerful *Ram Mantra* by chanting which we can purify our mind gradually and develop all the Divine qualities which are absolutely necessary for our spiritual progress and final attainment.

When we chant the *Mantra* we are sure to develop all the Divine qualities. We will start loving others as our own, and serving others.

We will be honest, we will be sacrificing our life for the sake of others. Let us develop these qualities and understanding the object of human life, let us do whatever is necessary to go beyond this human life and realise our divinity.

300. Become real *Bhaktas*

We are all *Bhaktas*. Therefore I have not come here to speak to you but to have your blessed company. Today is a holy day — Rama Navami day. As such it is a blessing to have the company of *Bhaktas*. We like to move with *Bhaktas* because *Bhaktas* alone can give us the real joy of their company. It is a great blessing to have the company of such *Bhaktas*.

When we say we are *Bhaktas*, we know that we all *Bhaktas* belong to one God. We may be followers of different saints but all the same we are all *Bhaktas*. There is no division at all in it. We will not feel that because we are devotees of a particular saint, we are not devoted to other saints. When we are devoted to one saint, we will be equally reverential and respectful to all other saints.

Our Guru, whom we revere, is the manifestation of God as also are all the other saints. Respecting our Guru, if we show disrespect to other Gurus, we are actually disrespecting our own Guru. So the first thing we have to understand is that all saints are

manifestations of our own Guru and as such they should be respected by us as we respect our own Guru.

Bhaktas are a class by themselves. They can be easily identified — not by appearance but by their behaviour, by their attitude. *Bhaktas* are very loving to others. They are perfectly peaceful. They serve others selflessly. Their life is dedicated to God. They try to see God in everything and therefore their life will be a great blessing to humanity. They keep chanting God's name constantly and thus remember Him. Because of that they are always happy. Happiness means not this worldly happiness but happiness of the eternal, because they are in tune with God who is eternal. If you enter the house of *Bhaktas*, you will find the entire atmosphere is surcharged with the peace and power of God's Name. The atmosphere there is so peaceful, so harmonious because all the inmates of that house must be chanting God's name and loving each other.

So it is necessary that we all should become real *Bhaktas*. We should be remembering God constantly, communing with God constantly, trying to see God in everybody, trying to serve Him in everybody, thus making our life blessed and thereby becoming a blessing to humanity.

We are all followers of saints or Gurus. If we remember the lives of our Gurus we know how they had been struggling to realize God and ultimately realized God and became embodiments of God themselves. Ours is to follow their teachings and thus become one with them and enjoy eternal happiness. *Bhaktas* are always happy because there is nothing for them to grumble about as they submit to God's will in all matters. They have given themselves up in the hands of God. They know their God who is eternal, who is all pervading, is taking care of them in every way, as the mother is taking care of a child. They do not have to worry about anything at all. Difficulties may arise, they may be anxious but at the same time they are sure that God will see to it that they are taken care of.

Many people who say: "I have surrendered to God's will", expect certain things to be done the way they want and if things do not happen that way, they are disappointed. This is not perfect surrender. Let us develop that attitude of surrender with 100% renunciation and total resignation to the will of God: "I know I am in the hands of God and He is taking care of me. I have nothing to worry. Whatever happens — good or bad — is His responsibility." That must be our attitude and that is perfect surrender. The *Bhakta* who has this attitude is always happy.

Let us therefore become real devotees of God — devotees who have His constant remembrance — by chanting His name or by any other method — and acceptance of all incidents as happening by His will and remain happy and peaceful in all conditions and circumstances. Let us pray to Him to make us real devotees and let us enjoy eternal happiness.

May the all-merciful God bless you all with His constant remembrance, the attitude of perfect surrender to His will and take you to the supreme goal of God-realization.

301. Nursing the sick — great *Seva*

You are taking up a profession which, apart from being most noble, throws open the possibility of achieving the highest goal of human existence. All that you have to do is to serve the suffering patients well by looking upon them as the very forms of God. Service done with this attitude automatically becomes worship of the Lord. This is possible if, while doing such service, you keep chanting the name of God — any Name that you hold dear — bringing before your mental vision the form of your chosen ideal and His attributes. You will then not only get the strength to carry on with your work efficiently but also enjoy happiness in doing the work.

302. The do's and don'ts for a pure life

Beloved Papa has given us some hints as to what we should do and what we should not do to walk on the Divine path. “Gita tells you what you are in reality. It infuses into you strength, purity and peace. It is a mine of wisdom. Dive deep into it and you will come by the priceless gems it holds. It is made clear at the end of Gita that the highest acme of God-realization is to be a perfect devotee of the Lord — a veritable embodiment of Divine knowledge, Divine action and Divine love. Such a devotee is the very form and expression of God or God Himself in human form”.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita provides a barometer, as it were, demarcating clearly the do's and don'ts to help in assessing the degree of progress the seeker has made in attaining Divine Knowledge, in transforming every action into Divine Action and in becoming the embodiment of Divine Love.

Let us make a firm resolve to read every day the below-mentioned maxims which are enshrined in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* and put the same into practice.

- ◆ Be rid of 'I' and 'mine'
- ◆ Be mentally united with the Lord
- ◆ Be of firm resolve and steadfast of mind
- ◆ Be balanced in pairs of opposites, like joy and sorrow, heat and cold, etc.

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- ♦ Be the same in favourable and unfavourable circumstances
- ♦ Be regular in *Yoga* and meditation
- ♦ Be upright in body, speech and mind
- ♦ Be devout in the service of the preceptor
- ♦ Be non-violent in thought, word and deed
- ♦ Be contented with whatever is available
- ♦ Be pure internally and externally
- ♦ Be full of devotion to the Lord
- ♦ Be friendly and compassionate
- ♦ Be forgiving and impartial
- ♦ Be free from envy, perturbation and fear
- ♦ Be free from the sense of doership
- ♦ Be free from attachment
- ♦ Be free from self-esteem and egotism
- ♦ Be free from malice towards all beings
- ♦ Be free from anger even on provocation
- ♦ Abstain from gossip
- ♦ Accept both praises and reproaches alike
- ♦ Cultivate humility
- ♦ Cultivate perfect purity of mind
- ♦ Chant God's Name and sing His glories
- ♦ Do charity in its *Sattwic* form
- ♦ Do not hate or slander
- ♦ Do not grieve
- ♦ Develop dispassion towards the objects of enjoyment of the world

- ♦ Develop forbearance, fearlessness, sublimity, fortitude and mildness
- ♦ Keep control over body, mind and senses
- ♦ Ponder constantly over the hollowness of birth, death, old age and disease
- ♦ Surrender mind and resign to the Lord
- ♦ See the Divine in all and love all alike
- ♦ Study the teachings of the Vedas and other sacred books
- ♦ Treat alike both friend and foe
- ♦ Take to contemplation

Please read this daily at least once before you go to bed and try to find out how far you have been successful everyday in gaining some standard of progress in your spiritual life. Pray to God to give you that intense aspiration to realise HIM that will burn off all the impurities and make you crystal pure to reveal Himself in your heart.

303. Preservation of *Dharma*

We who are engaged in spiritual, religious and *Dharmic* activities are facing a serious crisis because of the present Government's move to keep all temples, spiritual, religious and charitable institutions under its control. This move is basically against the very glorious tradition of this great country of ours handed down to us by our

illustrious and illumined ancestors. Viewing from the mundane level also this goes against the norms of natural justice. Hence this act of the Government has to be resisted by building up a strong public opinion against it so that the Government is pressurised to retrace its steps from its deplorable stand.

Just because a stray incident has happened in a *Mutt*, it does not warrant such a blanket control from the side of the Government in total disregard to the yeomen services silently rendered by innumerable well-run religious and charitable institutions.

At the same time, we should know why such a prompting was given in the minds of the present rulers by the almighty Lord of the universe by whose power alone everything happens in this world. It could only be to remind the persons manning the religious and charitable institutions to behave befitting their stature and to set their life as models for others to emulate. The people in the helm of affairs of the said institutions are considered to be personifications of moral/ethical and spiritual values. When they react on the same level as ordinary people, not only do they lose love, respect and support from the society but also lower down the status, sanctity and decorum they have been commanding.

We have to face the situation invoking

the Lord's blessings on us for strength and courage. We have to do all that is necessary to see that this idea of the Government does not take shape. But one thing we should not forget. While using all our forces to gain our cause, we must be absolutely non-violent in every respect, i.e. in thought, word and deed. We should not feel ill-will towards anybody, nor hurt anybody by words or deeds. Even if we are hurt, we should not bear any ill-will towards that person or those persons and thus maintain our equanimity in all conditions, however trying they may be. Then only we can expect God's protection.

As a first step in this direction, an appeal has to be drafted and sent to all the elected members of Kerala Legislative Assembly in general and to the members representing the opposition parties in particular. The write-up should be worded in such a way that it should highlight the need and relevance of such institutions and their unique style of functioning. The said appeal must also be posted to the editors of all dailies/weeklies/monthlies with a request to come out with editorial articles on the subject-matter. The President of India and the Governor of Kerala should be requested not to give their assent to any such bill. AIR, Doordarshan, Asianet and the like must also be approached to bring out suitable programmes so as to lead this matter to a public debate.

Secondly leading and out-standing personalities may be requested to issue press release almost everyday in all major dailies and regularly in weeklies/monthlies expressing their disagreement to the subject move of the Government.

Besides doing all the above, everyone interested in stopping the Government from taking over the *Dharmasthapanas*, should pray to the all-merciful Lord who is the Controller of the entire universe and chant His Name — any name, *Ram Nam*, *Krishna Nam*, *Shiv Nam* or any other Name of God at least 5000 times daily. This is the *Tapas* all have to do for facing this crisis successfully.

May God, Who is the upholder of *Dharma* and Who is ever with you all, bless your efforts with all success and save the temples, spiritual, religious and *Dharmic* institutions from humiliation and trouble so that they may continue to serve the public by helping them to lead a better life, to aspire for a higher life, strive for and ultimately reach the Supreme Goal of human life.

304. The ‘haves’ should help the ‘have-nots’.

The present days are such that many aged persons have become homeless and many children have become destitute. It is the responsibility of the more fortunate ones to

find ways and means to look after those old and young ones, taking care of their physical needs and providing the necessary nourishment for their souls and thus making them feel that life is holy, it has a purpose and therefore it is worth living.

The old, unwanted and destitute men and women must have a shelter, security and peace and plenty of opportunity to turn their mind once for all from the transitory drama of life to the Reality and work hard to return to their Source, putting an end to the painful and torturous cycle of birth and death. The young ones who have yet to see life should grow up in this most congenial and *Sattwic* atmosphere into useful citizens, making their life useful and happy by serving and giving happiness to others.

The well-placed ones should therefore serve the less fortunate ones in all possible ways through body, mind and money (*Tan-Man-Dhan*) and thus earn the grace of God, who Himself is seated in the hearts of all those young and old ones who need such service. By serving them, looking after them as different forms of God Himself, they are doing the real worship. This is an all comprehensive *Sadhana*.

So those who are contributing towards the service of the old and young ones should remember that God Himself, coming in the

form of these poor and destitute, is giving them a chance to serve Him and thus get the maximum benefit of the service which will help them progress fast in their *Sadhana* and ultimately realize that everything is 'Vasudeva'.

305. Problems of the aged

From the past twenty-five years or so there has been a marked change in the life style of families breaking the tradition of living together, loving one another and taking care of the old parents with all concern. Now, parents at their advanced age, feel that they are neglected by their children on whom they had poured all their love and affection and pinned all their faith for a peaceful retired life. This has led to their searching for old age homes and such other places where they can spend their last days peacefully. This has become a universal problem.

Even if they get a place how can such old people get over the frustration in their life caused by the betrayal by their own children? Where is peace for them? This is unfortunately the condition of the majority of our senior citizens. Only the children of such parents can remedy matters. They should understand that it is their responsibility to take full care of their parents, whatever difficulties they may have to undergo for the same. They have to

sacrifice some of their comforts and conveniences for the sake of their parents. In many cases the trouble starts when the daughter-in-law in the house and in some cases the son himself feels that the presence of the aged is a nuisance and curtails their freedom. It is here that the husband has to assert himself and never allow his wife to have her own way. Mostly he does not do that, but submits to his wife's whims at the cost of the peace for his parents and for himself. If it is the husband who is at fault, the wife has to advise the husband.

While treating the aged parents in this way and making them leave the home for good, the husband and wife do not realise that their action is a seed they are sowing in the hearts of their own children. The seed will sprout, the plant will grow, flower and produce a bitter fruit which will be presented to them in their own old age by their own children. Law of *Karma* is inexorable.

It is also true that in some cases it is the attitude of the parents that makes them responsible for the sorry state of affairs at home. They go on interfering in all activities in the house and refuse to recognise their son and daughter-in-law as equals. This causes friction.

Can this trend not be stopped? Yes.

Only a little *Viveka* is necessary. The husband and wife soon after their marriage must decide to be faithful and loving to their parents. The husband's parents and wife's parents must be given the same love and reverence by both. They should never think of sending them away for any reason. The presence of elders in the house should be considered as a great blessing. Husband and wife must serve the parents with all love and be models for their own children. On the part of parents, they should try to lead a *vanaprasthi's* life even while living with their children by not meddling in all the affairs too much. They should have the maturity to forget and forgive even if little things that are not acceptable to them happen.

Such a *Sattwic* nature can be developed only if both the husband and wife as well as the parents are devoted to God and have some idea of the higher values of life. A devout life alone can make one think correctly, get right guidance, be happy and make others happy. They will thus be sowing seeds of *Karma* that will only bring forth sweet fruits.

306. Divine life

Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj called this the Divine Life Society. I am sure by that he meant that the Society

should help all to realise their divinity and see the divinity in everybody. So all those who are members of DLS and those who call themselves devotees of other saints, should feel that the only purpose of life is to realise the Divinity, see Divinity in others and thus enjoy supreme happiness.

How do we see Divinity in others? We cannot see God because God is invisible. But His manifestation is visible. We see Him in His manifestations. The entire Universe is His manifestation. As He is all-pervading, He is seated in every atom of His manifestation. We must be conscious of His eternal presence in everything that we see — every form, every human being, every man, every woman, every animal, every creature. If we maintain this attitude we will be progressing very fast on the spiritual path and realise our divinity.

It is not very difficult to lead a spiritual life living in the world. Now, hear this story our Gurudev was fond of telling. Not long ago there was a Maharaja in India who was a very pious man. He was so devoted to God that he could feel God's presence in everybody especially the *Sadhus* and *Sannyasis* who were wandering in those days living only on alms. This Raja was fond of serving such *Sadhus*. These *Sadhus* had therefore free entry into his palace. So from morning till evening many

Sadhus and *Sannyasis* went to his palace, received right royal *Pujas* from the Raja. As soon as a *Sadhu* entered the palace, he was very cordially welcomed, was made to sit on a pedestal, the Maharaja himself would bring a large plate, ask the *Sadhu* to place his feet on the plate, wash his feet chanting the Lord's name with all love. The Raja used to forget himself in such worship. He would offer Sandal paste, flowers and *Naivedyam* to the *Sadhu* and also give him a lot of valuable presents. This was a daily affair. After the *Puja* was over he would drink the *Padathirtha* with all devotion.

Many *Sadhus* were received and worshipped daily. His ministers and others in the palace knew that some of the *Sadhus* were not genuine and were only pretending to be *Sadhus*. But they could not do anything or say anything about the *Sadhus* to the Raja because he would not listen to what others said about them. One day a *Sadhu* was received right royally and was being worshipped and the Maharaja was fully absorbed in such worship. One of the members of the palace who knew that *Sadhu*, called the Chief Minister and told him that the *Sadhu* was a bogus one. But looking at the Maharaja fully absorbed in the worship, nobody dared to go near him and tell him the fact. So they waited for sometime. After the *Puja* was over, the *Sadhu* got a number

of presents by way of clothes, food items and also cash and left the palace. The Chief Minister did not then tell anything to the Raja but waited for an opportune time.

The same evening in the town, that *Sadhu*, a professional magician, was having a performance. The Ministers came to know about it and informed the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister thought, that was the right opportunity to expose the magician who came as a *Sadhu*. He suggested to the Raja that they might go for a drive to some places in the evening. The Raja agreed and they went out. After going out to different places, they came to the ground where the performance of the magician was going on. When very near the stage the Minister asked the Raja, "Do you recognise that magician?" Maharaja looked at the magician, immediately got down from the carriage and straight went to the platform and did a *Dandavat Namaskar* to the magician.

You can imagine a Maharaja doing a *Dandavat Namaskar* in public to a bogus *Sadhu*, a magician who came as a *Sadhu* and received worship from him. When he got up he said, "Oh Lord, what wonderful *Lila* you play! Only this morning you came to me in the form of a *Sadhu*, now you are playing the part of a magician — what all parts you can take I cannot understand. Your ways are mysterious." That

was the real feeling he had. He never took him to be a *Sadhu* or a magician. He took him to be God himself playing different parts. This is however possible only for a devotee who practises seeing God in everybody. When this story was being told, one Maharaja was sitting in front of our Gurudev. When he heard that the other Maharaja in the story did *Dandavat Namaskar* to the *Sadhu*, he just jumped from his seat. He was so excited as he himself was very devoted. That much devotion we must have so as to see the Divine in everybody. That is what our Masters have been teaching us and want us to put into practice. Let us pray to God to give us the vision of seeing Him alone in everybody and the awareness of his presence everywhere — seeing His hand alone working in this universe at all times and in all places. May He bless us all with this supreme vision and grant us eternal happiness.

307. Value of Satsang

All of you attend *Satsang* only because you feel benefited in your *Sadhana* by such programmes. Benefited in the sense that they help you to be in tune with God at least as long as you are attending such programmes and, in some cases, for a much longer time. So, what is needed for *Sadhana* is more of such occasions that can help us to commune with

God more and more and ultimately commune with Him constantly. Before one has God-vision, one has to remain in constant communion with God. Though such *Satsang* programmes help us, we cannot have them always. We can have them only once in a way. We feel unhappy when we do not get more of such occasions, as our happiness depends upon the external programmes. We have, therefore, to devise ways and means to remember God without any external aids. Even when we are attending such programmes, unless we train our minds to commune with God, it will not help us very much.

So, the first thing we have to do is to train the mind to commune with God — at first under favourable conditions like *Bhajans* etc. and, gradually, in all conditions. There may be so many unfavourable conditions that we may have to face in our daily lives. As soon as we leave this place, we have to face the heavy traffic, lot of noise outside. Not only do they not help us to easily commune with God but they also prove a disturbing factor.

Saints/*Mahatmas*, our spiritual guides, have told us again and again that there is none but God in this world. The whole world is God Himself. God alone is. This is the *Mahavakya*. When God alone is, why are we then not able to see Him, feel Him? There is something

standing between us and God. Though God is all-pervading and He is never away from us, we feel that we are separate from God. We don't feel His presence. It is to feel His presence that the *Mahatmas* have given us the holy and all-powerful *Mantra*, the constant repetition of which can gradually purify our mind of all the dirt that causes the disturbance. Only in a pure and still mind God reveals Himself.

So, the *Sadhaka's* effort is to purify the mind and make it still. That stillness and purification comes by God-remembrance. *Satsang* helps to commune with God and gives us an impetus in our *Sadhana*. There may be occasions when *Satsang* is not available. Then, we have to repose complete faith in the *Mahavakya* and train our mind to see God in everything, to see everything as manifestation of God. This practice must go on constantly. May the almighty God bless you all with success in your *Sadhana* and lead you to the supreme goal of realisation of your oneness with Him, resulting in eternal happiness.

308. Prepare yourselves to prepare others.

You are all blessed people because in your young age itself you have been blessed with the aspiration to take to a higher life giving up the pleasures of the transitory life and you

have a scholarly and experienced *Acharya* to guide you. You are all preparing for a higher life. At the same time, you are preparing yourselves to prepare others also for the higher life. That is the greatest service you can do to humanity: gifting of *Brahma Vidya* to many many aspiring souls. May the all-merciful Lord bless your efforts with all success and at the same time lead you to the supreme goal.

309. On adoption of *Sannyas*

Beloved Papa did not believe in the traditional initiation into the order of *Sannyas*. His very life shows that renunciation or *Sannyas* is not something that can be given or adopted by merely changing external conditions.

He believed that it is a natural process in man and when one feels that he has great and intense dispassion to the things of the world, and equally or more intense aspiration to realize God, he can take to the order of *Sannyas*. Though certain rituals are done externally, it is mainly an inner or mental development and transformation after attaining certain amount of purification.. When the mind is perfectly purified, the real transformation takes place and one then will be able to identify oneself with the *Atman*,

giving up wrong identification with the body. The moment one identifies oneself with the *Atman*, attachment to the body, its relatives and friends, possessions etc. drop off without any effort. That is real *Sannyas*. It is not really necessary to give up the household and wander into the wide world in search of God because God is within us and everywhere about us. One can as well remain in white clothes and get the highest realization.

What is said here is not meant to criticize the traditional way of initiation into the order of *Sannyas*. The tradition of *Sannyas* started centuries ago. Many heads of spiritual and religious institutions initiate their chosen disciples into the order of *Sannyas* if and when they find them fit for a life of renunciation and austerity so that the young initiates may perform their *Sadhana* and also learn the scriptures in the holy and austere atmosphere under strict discipline and thus prepare themselves for the inner transformation which alone will qualify them to shoulder the responsibilities of guiding others on the spiritual path.

In Beloved Papa's case, he took to the order of *Sannyas*. But, he did not encourage *Sannyas* for others, except for one, that is myself. Though I did not ask, he asked me to take to the order of *Sannyas*, and gave me the

cloth and the name. In a few other cases he agreed that they might adopt *Sannyas* because they requested him persistently. Otherwise he was only telling everybody to lead the ordinary householder's life with the aspiration to realize God while doing *Sadhana* at the same time.

310. Life of Beloved Papa — a source of inspiration

Because of God's grace and because God chose to reveal Himself in Beloved Papa, he became a blessing to the entire world and especially to the seekers of Truth. We all would not have been here but for his having taken to the order of *Sannyas* and realised his oneness with the Supreme Being, thus being in a position to guide humanity to the supreme goal of life.

Beloved Papa had climbed the highest peak of devotion with the result that his mind was filled with Ram through and through. He wanted Ram only. He talked about Ram only. He was living for Ram only. Nothing else mattered to him. It was in that mental condition that Ram prompted him to leave Mangalore, to throw himself entirely in the arms of Ram, his beloved, and on this date, 27th December, 1922, on the banks of Kaveri, he put on himself, as directed by Ram, the ochre robes, leaving the current to carry away

the white clothes — the last material that he was till then wearing — that broke his connection with the worldly life. During those momentous few minutes he prayed to Ram:

“O Ram, O Love Infinite — Protector of all the worlds! It is by Thy wish alone that Thy humble slave has been induced to adopt *Sannyas*. In Thy name alone, O Ram, he has given up *samsara*, and cut asunder all bonds, all ties.

O Ram, bless Thy poor devotee with Thy grace. May Ramdas be endued with strength, courage and faith to carry out in Thy name, Ram, the following vows and bear all trials and all kinds of privations that may beset the path of a *Sannyasi* in his passage through the rough and perilous life of a mendicant:-

- ♦ This life be henceforth entirely consecrated to meditation and the service of Sri Ram.
- ♦ Strict celibacy be observed, looking upon all women as mothers.
- ♦ The body be maintained and fed upon the food procured by *bhiksha* or on what is offered as alms.”

From the worldly point of view it was an act of great renunciation. But from Beloved Papa's side, it was ‘induced’ by Ram and therefore a natural falling off of everything that was holding him back to the world. What was

left with him was his intense devotion to Ram. The same devotion had started purifying his mind and, at this stage, possessed him so thoroughly that nothing of the lower nature could influence him. In a short time his mind was made so pure that it could not remain a mind any longer. It became quite still, calm. The individual sense that was sustained and nurtured by the mind till then could also not exist. What was left was pure consciousness alone. The darkness of ignorance which was preventing him from realizing his true Being had vanished and along with it all that made one's life unhappy. He could not say "I" any more. "The dew drop had become one with the sea." He had become a vehicle for God to work through. The love and bliss of God radiated through him.

We bring before us the qualities Beloved Papa had. He was absolute Truth incarnate. He was absolute love and his life was very very simple. All of you know very well that he has quite a number of books to his credit, giving out his experiences especially glorifying the power of *Ram Nam* and selfless service. The same he was talking to everybody in general and *Sadhakas* in particular. In fact he considered everybody a *Sadhaka* and talked mostly on that line only.

Usually Papa was not talking about the negative side of life. He was always telling

the *Sadhakas* to see the brighter side. He was trying to encourage developing the positive side of life. What was required of a *Sadhaka* first of all, as Papa always used to emphasize, was constant remembrance of God. Whatever way you may employ you must be able to maintain ceaseless remembrance of God. It means remembrance of God all the 24 hours. Whether you are working, whether you are eating, whether you are sleeping, whether you are doing anything else, you must be able to maintain that remembrance running through you. If this is done, he used to say, everything else would follow.

So, the foundation for spiritual life is constant remembrance of God. Of course, constant remembrance can come only if one is serious in *Sadhana*, if one's aspiration to realize God is very intense, and this again can come only if God chooses him to take him unto Himself, he can do it. Otherwise he cannot. Only if God wills we can progress on the spiritual path. This does not mean that we should be idle. We should not say that: 'Oh! God must shower His grace on us, then only we can realize; otherwise we cannot realize.'

The very fact that all of us are in touch with Beloved Papa and Mataji from a long time and the very fact that we have been aspiring for a higher life show that God has chosen to

reveal Himself in us and He will do it sooner or later. In the meantime we are made to do *Sadhana* — some very seriously, some in a half-hearted way all because our *Sadhana* is conditioned by our previous Vasanas and Samskaras. The results of many of the actions we had done in the past life do not permit us to take to intense *Sadhana*. Unless we have worked out all those we will not be able to do intense *Sadhana*. So by *Sadhana* alone we have to wash them off.

Beloved Papa has given us the *Mantra*. Let us chant the *Mantra* constantly, remember God ceaselessly and leave ourselves entirely in His hands. He will mould us and give us the right shape. Only thing we have to do is to leave ourselves in His hands. While chanting His name constantly, be aware of His presence within and without. You can think of Him as a personal God, or as an impersonal God. Once you feel His presence always with you, make Him your constant companion. He is closer to you than anybody else. Thus, have his close companionship and carry on with your *Sadhana*, live blissfully and be sure He will take you to the supreme goal — oneness with Him.

311. High standard of renunciation necessary.

Though Beloved Papa was talking in the

public that one can as well remain in the white clothes and get the highest realization, he really believed that a high standard of renunciation is necessary before one can reach the supreme goal. Once it so happened that in a large gathering — in fact many times in gatherings — he was telling that it was not necessary for anybody to externally renounce anything. What was required was internal renunciation and one could reach God by remaining at home. After hearing him for some time, I asked him once why he was telling that it was possible for everybody to reach God while remaining at home without changing their occupation, their position or status and did not emphasize the need for external renunciation. He told me: “Ramdas will show you tomorrow. He will talk about the highest renunciation. See what happens.”

The next day in the gathering he started talking about the need for external renunciation — not only the need, but he considered external renunciation as an absolute necessity for realizing God. He said that spiritual life is not a joke. You have to give up everything — physically and mentally. You cannot have Him for ‘nothing’. In that strain when he went on talking, some of the devotees who were very eagerly listening to him, gradually stepped back, i.e., they showed

that they were not interested in listening to him. After some time a few of them got up and left the place. Seeing this Papa winked at me, meaning that people are not pleased to hear about the highest renunciation.

Afterwards when the meeting was over he told me: "See what happened when Ramdas talked about external renunciation. People are not prepared for that. That is why Ramdas tells them that until they are prepared to take the leap, they can stay at home and practise *Sadhana*, but a day will come when they will be taken out of their household and made to remain in solitude for some time at least. Not that they should be wandering all their lives in search of God, but at least for some time they need a solitary life for intense *Sadhana*. When they are ready, either they themselves will leave everything or finding that they are useless in the house, the relations will push them out."

312. On surrender

From the time Beloved Papa was called to adopt *Sannyas*, breaking the small family circle to embrace the entire universe as his own, in the year 1922, till his *Mahasamadhi* in 1963, he was closely moving with devotees of all types and was talking to them about God, in his newly found ecstatic joy. He was dinning

into their ears the purpose of human life, their imperative need to come out of all limitations caused by the self-imposed ego and the resultant misery, to realize their divinity and thereby enjoy eternal freedom and happiness. Though there are several paths leading to this goal, he taught us from his own experience that the chanting of the all-powerful Name of God is the safest and most suitable to all.

You will find from Beloved Papa's writings that he gives great emphasis to constant chanting of God's Name, His ceaseless remembrance and absolute surrender to His will. He even adds that these three are synonymous with God-realization. This means, he who chants God's Name constantly, has ceaseless remembrance of God and whose surrender to God is absolute, is as good as having realized God.

"Surrender" is a word that appears in Beloved Papa's utterances very often, because it is a magic word for him. He is very fond of it and extols it whenever he gets an opportunity. He assures that the moment we surrender to His will, we are flooded with peace. But, for a common man, especially a brave man, "surrender," means a sense of defeat and disappointment. When two persons or countries are engaged in a fight, the one who feels too weak to defeat the opponent decides

to admit defeat and face the serious consequences of humiliation and ignominy. He raises his hands in surrender. The fight ends — one in deep dejection because of the defeat and the other boisterous in his victory.

To a devotee, however, “surrender” has an entirely different meaning. There is no fight. There is no defeat. There is no humiliation. There is only victory and the consequent joy. If at all we call it a fight, it is a fight of the ego, the individuality, for its survival. The ego that is apparently fighting for its survival does not really exist. It is only a product of the illusory veil put on by the *Atman*, on Himself, just for play — *Lila* — as the devotees say. “Surrender” here is the process of tearing of the illusory veil, which caused a sense of separation between the devotee and God. The result is the realization of the devotee’s oneness with Him. So “surrender” here denotes the vanishing of the non-existent ego and therefore a victory of the devotee.

The truth is, as explained by saints and sages from their own experience and realization, God alone is and God’s power is absolute. This means, whatever is, is God. The universe is God. Any movement in the universe — however minute or gross — is taking place by His power only. The act of creation,

preservation and destruction is going on by His power only. Every man, animal, plant — every created being — is He Himself and is activated by His power only. Yet man thinks he is an individual as also all others, and that by each one's power alone everything is being done. He does not acknowledge the Supreme Power — the Absolute Power. As long as he feels and thinks this way, he does not know anything of the life of freedom. He is bound by his own actions and reaps the sweet and bitter fruits of his good and bad actions respectively, continuing to rotate in the cycle of birth and death.

The spiritual aspirant learns from his Master, all about his Divine nature, the reason for his being caught up by the limitations of the ego and how he can cut asunder all the limitations and realize his true nature. He starts his practice to get rid of his ego sense. He tries to accept God's power as absolute. He tries to see everything as the manifestation of God. He tries to bring to his mind that whatever is done in the universe through others and through his body is done by God Himself. He gradually understands that the little "I" he was clinging to so far, has no place anywhere; it does not really exist and God alone is. This is absolute surrender. This is God-realization.

So what is to be done by us? Try to keep constant remembrance of God. Try to see everyone and everything as the manifestation of God. Try to feel that what all others do is by God's power only; what we do is also by His power alone. As a practice we should feel and say:

“Oh Lord! You are everything and beyond everything.

It is Your power that works through everybody.

It is Your power that activates me.

Make me realize that as a separate individual I do not exist.

Make me merge in Your eternal Being and Existence.”

With this prayer and *Ram Nam* in our mind, our mind will get gradually purified and we will be able to look upon everything as different forms of God and as a result our heart will be overflowing with love — real love — for everybody. We will be able to face all situations, however difficult or unpleasant, calmly, as then we will be seeing God's hand in every event.

This practice of surrender is a ‘must’ not only for all spiritual aspirants for their progress and attainment, but also for all those who aspire to lead a life of peace and happiness. Everyone meets with difficult

situations in life. The only way to successfully overcome them is to bring in God there. The moment we are aware that it is God, who is behind every event, we will be raised from all gloom and fear to strength and courage. Every day we get occasions to practice this and thus free ourselves from worries and anxieties and maintain tranquillity whatever may happen.

313. Papa's *Sannyas* — its uniqueness

But for what had happened in 1922, this Ashram would not have come up and we would not have been here. Beloved Papa renounced the so-called worldly life and saw everything as Divine and therefore accepted and embraced the whole universe as his own. The impact of the renunciation or the spirit of renunciation he had, burnt off all his vasanas and gave him a new life, as it were, and made him Swami Ramdas, and that impact had its influence on the lives of innumerable devotees who saw him and followed his teachings. It will continue to influence the lives of thousands of devotees in future also. Such is the effect of one person's renunciation.

In fact only by God's grace one can get such renunciation. It is not by our power or by our effort that we get such fiery renunciation. But what we can do is to appreciate or understand what Beloved Papa gained by his renunciation

and try to reach such a state so that we may also enjoy the same peace and bliss.

We are here as devotees of Beloved Papa only because he became a *Sannyasi* at that time.. In fact, I would say, the word renunciation does not suit very well in our Beloved Papa's case, because acceptance of everything was his creed. He was so much devoted to God, so much immersed in God-remembrance, so much forgetful of the day-to-day world that he did not want anything else. He wanted only God. He wanted to live in God, move in God and have his being in God. So all the other things, that is, the household, the relations, the old family life itself, dropped away from him setting him free. He became a free bird and wandered all over India with *Ram Nam* on his lips and the vision of Ram everywhere and accepting everything that happened as happening by the will of God. There was absolutely no struggle in his giving up things or renouncing things. You must have read in his books, *IN QUEST OF GOD* and *IN THE VISION OF GOD*, that his only aim was to keep up God-remembrance all the 24 hours and submit to His will in all matters and thus remain in constant communion with Him. It is a great lesson for us.

Though he left the household and wandered all over India, went to the

Himalayas and lived in caves, he has not been advising his devotees to do the same as he himself thought that it was not really necessary. He says that in his case it came about because God willed it so. So unless God wills it so in other cases also it may not be necessary to subject oneself to such a rigorous discipline. That should not be an excuse for us to sit quiet.

Our effort should be to remember God constantly and thus remain in communion with Him ceaselessly. We should seek only God. If we want also many other things of the world, our devotion becomes divided, and we may not find time to remember God constantly as other things we are after drag our mind down. But those devotees of Beloved Papa or devotees of God who want only God should devote all the 24 hours for God-remembrance employing every method possible. Then automatically other things fall away from us without effort.

In Beloved Papa's case we have seen on some occasions he had no food to eat. He was so oblivious to hunger and thirst because he was absorbed in God. He did not think of food at all. When somebody offered food to him, he told that friend, "Oh friend, you reminded Ramdas of food!" So also if we live in God all the time, we will be forgetting our

worldly needs and comforts. Automatically the Divine qualities will be developing in us without our knowledge.

Unfortunately what is happening now even with us is that though we are prepared to renounce big things like family, position and properties, we are not able to give up small things like likes, dislikes and petty prejudices which unfortunately hinder our progress. If we maintain God-remembrance all the 24 hours and if we are successful in that, we can be sure we will be guided unerringly. We will not be made to slip down from the path. God will be protecting us every moment.

So our effort must only be to maintain His remembrance all the 24 hours of the day — at least during all our waking hours. This is what our Beloved Papa did and expects us all to do. He assured us that if we have God-remembrance constantly everything else will automatically follow. Let us all do this simple thing — maintain His remembrance ceaselessly. To maintain that remembrance ceaselessly we have to love Him with all our heart. Then only it will be possible. So let us pray for this love from the bottom of our heart so that we may remember Him constantly and ultimately realise our oneness with Him.

314. True renunciation leads ultimately to eternal happiness.

But for renunciation, we would not have had our Beloved Papa. But for renunciation, we would not have had many of our saints like Pujya Mataji, Shankaracharya, Gautam Buddha, Bhagawan Ramana. Thus the list goes on endlessly.

What is renunciation? Renunciation is a necessary stage in the life of a spiritual aspirant. In a state of intense dispassion, the aspirant wants only God and gives up everything that stands in the way of his spiritual progress. Presuming that his possessions are responsible for his being earthbound, he gives up all that he possesses and also gives himself up to God. This is a natural development in the life of a *Sadhaka* and proportionate to his progress the earthly possessions drop off from him by themselves without any serious effort on his part. His effort then is only to keep his mind centred on God constantly and never to lose communion with Him. Such a *Sadhaka*, in a very short time, reaches his goal — the realization of his oneness with God in His *Nirguna* and *Saguna* aspects which gives him the experience that everything is God and that because he is one with God, he is everything.

Renunciation alone has produced saints

— renunciation, not necessarily external but renunciation of sense of possession and sense of 'I' and 'mine'. After their attainment, they may possess everything and live like others, at the same time without a sense of possession — 'I' and 'mine'. The first acid test of renunciation, according to our Master Beloved Papa, is that one should be prepared to beg for food from amongst those known to oneself.

Saints tell us that though they themselves had to take the extreme step, others need not have to go through such hardships. In fact the hardships appeared to be hard only for the onlookers. Those who were actually passing through the so-called hardships never felt so, as their mind was fully absorbed in God and they were above body-consciousness.

How it transforms: A marked change in the life of a householder in the year 1922 brought about such a transformation that he progressed unimaginably fast on the spiritual path and, in a very short time, rose from the human to the Divine, from an ignorant person to sainthood and thus a blessing to humanity. This was the renunciation of Vittal Rao who later blossomed as Beloved Papa Swami Ramdas. He was so much absorbed in God-thought that everything worldly fell off from him.

After taking to the order of *Sannyas* and

for a few years, Beloved Papa was moving about in different parts of the country without possessing anything, without knowing where he could get his next meal, where he could lay his head and rest for the night. He was not conscious of his external conditions or discomforts, for, his consciousness had gone beyond his body. He never felt he was undergoing any hardship. He felt whatever came to him was from God, whomsoever he met was God Himself and whatever happened was by God's will. Thus everything in His life was divinised. Then where was the question of feeling of sorrow or hardship?

Sincerity in his renunciation and after-effects of the momentous transformation not only took him to the supreme heights of God-realisation, drowning him in the peace and bliss of God, but also transformed thousands and thousands of spiritual aspirants, giving them the support and guidance and leading them to the highest goal. He was all bliss and peace because he was continuously in tune with God and radiated that peace and happiness to one and all who came in contact with him. His heart-pourings and expressions of his lofty experiences inspired earnest aspirants everywhere — awakening them to the Reality, leading the more advanced ones to the supreme goal. This continues even after

Beloved Papa shuffled off his mortal coil and will continue. This is the result of one individual's renunciation. Beloved Papa's life and teachings only confirm that true renunciation and unconditional surrender lead us to God and grant us everything, ultimately eternal happiness.

A few years ago one devotee who used to be very intimate with Beloved Papa, once asked: "Papa, some years ago you renounced everything — all possessions and comforts and as a result you are now blessed with a big Ashram and all sorts of comforts. I would also like to renounce everything provided I will be assured of such comforts and possessions after a few years."

Beloved Papa laughed and replied. "When Ramdas was wandering as an itinerant *Sadhu*, he never felt that he had renounced anything. When he was trying to keep his mind centred on God constantly, many things fell off from him by themselves and his only aspiration was to realise God. He had absolutely no thoughts of the future. He wanted only God. Therefore he 'got' God. Because God is everything, he got everything. He possesses everything without the sense of possession. Everything belongs to God".

From the talk of the devotee as stated above, it is clear that he was prepared to

renounce everything only if he was assured of a comfortable life and all possessions a few years later. It means his eye was on 'a comfortable life and a big load of possessions' and not on GOD. This cannot, therefore, be called renunciation.

Not deprivation but paving the way for abundance. Renunciation is a word not very palatable to householders. The very sound of it frightens them of the immediate deprivation of their worldly possessions. The general tendency of householders is to applaud others when they take to *Sannyas*, and discourage and dissuade in all possible ways if any of their own family members shows even a slight inclination to renounce the family ties or take up serious spiritual studies/practices. They unfortunately, by the illusory power of God, think only of the immediate impact but do not care to foresee the distant future. They do not realise that it is only the perishable that the seeker tries to renounce and that too for gaining the Imperishable. Of course one who renounces does so spontaneously, without calculating the pro's and con's of his action. He cannot but renounce, for, when he is ripe, things fall off by themselves. He has no anxiety about his future as he is fully in the hands of God.

So, no one need be afraid of renunciation. Though it appears to take away everything

perishable, it is only to give you the Imperishable. May everyone imbibe the lofty ideals of renunciation and attain eternal happiness!

315. Pujya Mataji's devoted service

Our most beloved Mataji Krishnabai, whose advent to this world was in the year 1903, was unique in many respects. From childhood she was deeply devoted to God. "Service" was in her blood. These extraordinary traits in her became more apparent after she was drawn away from the materialistic way of life to that of intense *Sadhana* for the purpose of realising her oneness with God. Here her devotion to the Guru manifested itself in service to Him. For her, Guru is not merely the body or an individual. From the very beginning of her *Sadhana*, she had understood that Guru is God Himself who, in His formless aspect, is the all-pervading Existence and as form, is the entire universe. So she took it that real service to the Guru is to serve the whole manifestation. Those who came in contact with her knew how she served and also got the benefit of her service to the extent necessary according to the conditions and circumstances.

Our Beloved Mother was always attributing everything to Beloved Papa. In spite of it, she was often taking to task those

Sadhakas, who did something that could retard their progress in *Sadhana*, and others for some mistakes. She would scold them, sometimes so vehemently, according to the seriousness of the action, that anyone hearing this would feel that she was blaming the individual. When she was asked if it was not Beloved Papa seated in that person's heart who had done that, she would suddenly smile and say she was taking to task not the individual, but Beloved Papa in him for not having given him the necessary strength to desist from committing such mistakes.

This answer would raise again another vital question: When Beloved Mataji accepted everything as done by Beloved Papa Himself and that too for everybody's good, where was the need to ask Him why He did this or did not do that? At this stage Mataji invariably laughed and would say, in her characteristic humility, that her surrender to Papa was not complete. If complete, she would not have found fault with anyone for anything done. This answer was just to hoodwink others of her attainment. But she would also say, though very rarely, "By taking Beloved Papa to task, I am taking myself to task as Papa and myself are one!"

This shows clearly that while a *Sadhaka* tries to accept everything that happens

anywhere and at any time as happening by the will of God whom he considers separate from him, a saint is conscious that God alone is working out His will through the innumerable forms in the universe including his own physical body and all his actions are God's actions.

Now let us try to find out why Beloved Mataji had to pull us up occasionally. It was because we were erring, i.e. we were not doing things properly, or behaving as we should have behaved. All these mistakes happen because we have not understood Papa and Mataji and when Papa and Mataji pulled us up, we did not know it was God Himself who was protecting us by pointing out our mistakes and directing us on the right path.

316. Pujya Mataji's wonderful personality

In our life we meet with many personalities. Most of them are very ordinary and are easily forgotten. Some are striking and leave a very deep impression on us. There are some, very rare though, who, once seen or contacted, can never be forgotten.

Our dear Mataji is such a personality who leaves an indelible impression on us. Because of her simplicity, blissful nature, love and concern for others, selflessness, her equal vision etc., she becomes an unforgettable person. She

teaches without teaching. She corrects without correcting. She controls without controlling and she becomes a source of inspiration to all without her being aware of it.

In the course of the nearly sixty years of her physical presence in the Ashram, thousands and thousands must have come in contact with her and got themselves transformed by such contacts and never forgotten her all their lives. All those blessed ones who had her *darshan* and close contact may have many stories to tell about their dear Mataji as to how she helped them regain their cheer, how she gave them her helping hand whenever they needed, how she solved many a problem of theirs of different magnitudes and types, how she helped them on the spiritual path, how she proved to be a pillar of strength for them in their lives and how she, without any ostentation, played the part of a guide, philosopher and friend to everyone who placed full faith in her. Many of you must have had occasion to see her, watch her, observe her and be inspired by her charming personality. Let us recollect a few facets of this personality:

- ◆ Her Guru *Bhakti*
- ◆ Her intense aspiration as a *Sadhaka* to realize the Truth
- ◆ Later her intense desire to see that every one got that state

- ♦ Her dedication to the Guru — God
- ♦ Her universal vision and, as a result, her equal vision
- ♦ Her love that flowed towards everybody irrespective of caste, creed, colour or nationality
- ♦ Perfection in her duties
- ♦ Her surrender to the Guru
- ♦ The peace and serenity she maintained in all conditions and circumstances, and radiated wherever she happened to be.

Let us meditate on these different aspects of her most wonderful life and always try to live our life the way she wanted us to live. Our dear Mataji was anxious that all of us, her children, i.e. everyone in this world, should live happily, peacefully, without making any drastic change in the external life and strive only for the peace and happiness of the eternal. For this, her recipe is:

- ♦ Aspiration for realizing our true Being
- ♦ Love and devotion to the Guru
- ♦ Chanting of God's Name constantly
- ♦ Loving and serving those who come in contact with us, looking upon them as forms of our Guru
- ♦ Perfect surrender to the Guru who is God Himself

The best way we can serve our dear

Mataji is by trying to live up to the ideals she has placed before us, placing ourselves entirely in the hands of our Gurudev, who is one with our dear Mataji and who is seated in our heart and who is everywhere.

You all know that Pujya Mataji was very anxious that not only those who came in touch with Beloved Papa but also all those who came to the Ashram should realise the Truth at the earliest. She was talking about this to everybody and exhorting them to strive their best to reach this goal. During the last days of her stay on this earth she was expressing her disappointment that though she was anxious that everybody should strive to reach the goal she was finding that nobody was serious and all took things easy. She also expressed that they were so much attached to the personal forms of Beloved Papa and Mataji that in their presence they never cared to do *Sadhana* properly and added that they would become sincere and more earnest only after she dropped the body.

It was very painful to hear her. She meant that after she dropped the body all would be craving for Beloved Papa's and Mataji's presence. As the physical presence was not possible we would strive for their impersonal presence and would be more intense in our *Sadhana*. Now it is for every

one of us to search our own heart to see how far we have progressed after she dropped the body. Let us do our best to fulfil her desire, not for her sake but for our own sake. She is not going to gain anything new except the satisfaction that we have gained something. It is for us, for our supreme happiness, that we should try.

317. This is our Mataji

That I could serve Beloved Papa Swami Ramdas and Vishwamata Krishnabai for four decades was not an ordinary privilege. I could move with them so intimately that I could feel I am their child and I could take the “child’s” liberty with its parents. It was made possible only by their abundant grace. Besides being my beloved mother, Pujya Mataji was my most understanding guardian, spiritual guide and preceptor. The long years spent under her loving care and protection are the most pleasant part of my life and it will ever be green in my memory. No earthly mother could have tended her son so well as Pujya Mataji did. She was the Mother Divine to me as well as to others.

As a mother, she would keep a watchful eye on the devotees’ spiritual evolution and would lovingly suggest any change that might help them in their pursuit. She evinced interest in everyone in the Ashram, whether

they were permanent inmates or visiting devotees. Whether she knew the people for years or only for just a couple of hours, made no difference to her in her love and concern for them. It is nothing to be wondered at, as she was seeing her own Self in everyone. Whether one was far away or very near also did not make any difference to her. What drew Mataji's attention was the intensity of a person's devotion and the urgent need for bestowing her attention on him. That stemmed from her perfect identification with the entire manifestation and with the all-pervading Spirit.

Mataji's only concern was the welfare of the devotees. Her anxiety to see them progress fast and the deepest love she had for them were revealed at times in keen and cutting words. Readers may not quite understand that words cannot fully express her feelings as manifested in her face then and the tone in which the words were uttered. Unless one witnessed such a scene, one cannot even imagine, much less appreciate, the feelings behind her outpourings on some occasions.

Mataji had a complex personality and her moods were often unpredictable. Her scolding sometimes made the devotees feel rather hurt. But those who knew that behind

all these, was a heart full of deep love, compassion and concern for the quick progress of her spiritual children, would feel that Mataji was only ridding them of all their accumulated dirt in an apparently rough way.

Mataji wanted everyone in the Ashram, nay everyone who came in contact with her, to realize the eternal and infinite *Swaroopa* of Beloved Purushottam Papa. She firmly wished that they should get such an experience if only they tried earnestly for the same. She lost her temper when she saw that some of them were not alive to the need for quick spiritual progress. It is true that Mataji cannot be understood easily. She herself had said: "Papa used to tell me: 'It is very difficult for anyone to gauge your true nature and to judge your mood accurately.' May be because all *Swabhavas* are in me. Can you — anyone of you — gauge what my true nature is? You cannot, because all natures are there in me."

Often those who were most loved by her got the worst of her scolding, that too at times least expected. One day, a mother-devotee who had come to the Ashram on a visit only a couple of days before, was blissfully moving about enjoying the change from her drab routine life in a city to the peaceful and blissful atmosphere in the Ashram surcharged by the love pouring out from Mataji's heart. She was almost in ecstasy.

In her exuberant joy she was narrating something to Mataji, but made a slip for which she had to pay too heavy a price. While talking about her parents-in-law, she expressed that in spite of serving them to the best of her ability, they were not satisfied and were often getting irritated. Catching that point and taking it as a complaint that in spite of the best service rendered by her, her in-laws were not satisfied, Mataji, as if expressing her sympathy started telling her: "In spite of your best efforts to please your in-laws, your services are not appreciated, but found fault with. There must be something wrong in your attitude towards them. Are you able to love them as much as you love your parents? If you are honest, I am sure, the reply is 'No'. What is the use of your following me like a shadow when you have not been able to widen your vision so as to embrace your relations as your own? What do you learn from me? Did you complain about your parents? Then, why about your in-laws? Try at least to accept all your relations — on your side and your husband's side — as your own and serve them with all love and affection. Then try to look upon them as different forms of Beloved Papa and serve them as you would serve Beloved Papa himself. Then only is there any benefit from your coming here, and seeking my company. Beloved Papa will not be pleased

unless you try to widen your vision so as to embrace the whole world as your own. What joy is there in such service! Instead, you are hesitating to break your small circle and come out of it. You have not understood Beloved Papa and his teachings. This is because your *Ram Nam* chanting is not sufficient. Increase the chanting and pray to Beloved Papa to widen your vision." Saying this Mataji was getting more and more heated up, as it were, and the last few words were very sharp and cutting. The mother started shedding tears and could not utter a word.

Mataji continued: "Are you crying because I scolded you? If you are crying really because you have understood your mistake, there is a chance of your improving. Now, go, do not stand here. I will get more angry and continue to scold you." The mother-devotee went away sobbing. The moment she left the room, Mataji turned to me and laughed so much that all the anger she had, appeared a mere pretence and whatever had happened was like a momentary mark made on a sheet of water when beaten with a stick.

Continuing to laugh, Mataji said: "These people come here and feel they are doing a great thing by moving with me here and there. They float only on the surface. They do not go deep within and try to do things in the right

spirit. She was getting only soothing and loving words from me so far. Now this lashing will wake her up.” This was the way of our Mataji.

Beloved Papa had mentioned on more than one occasion that Mataji is such an exceptional person that Lord Brahma might have created her only with great difficulty! I am sure that those who have been the fortunate recipients of Mataji’s scolding and admonitions, which led them even to the point of frustration, have later understood that all these came out of a heart of gold, a heart which pined day and night for the supreme good of others and a heart that was never at rest until signs of spiritual progress were seen in all, a heart that was aching at the sufferings of others and much more so, when the seekers on the path of God-realization did not run or walk fast straight to the goal, but lingered, holding on to the petty, perishable things of the world.

318. Pujya Mataji’s concern

The following words of Pujya Mataji depict her great concern and anxiety on the spiritual progress of all those coming in contact with her. “The Ashram is Papa’s school. You have come here to learn Universal Love and Service. What is the use of coming here year after year and staying here for months if you

have not imbibed even the rudiments of Universal Love and Service? What use is an Ashram, *Math* or *Mandir* if the devotees who go there make no progress at all on the spiritual path? Does any school allow its children to simply come to the classes, spend some years and go away without passing a single examination? How can you prepare yourself to appear for "Papa's examinations" when you have not gone even beyond 'A', 'B' and 'C' alphabets? You should not simply stand outside the gates of Papa's mansion, shower compliments and praises on Papa and then turn back, without bothering to enter the gates and experiencing the bliss of Papa's Eternal Being. The main reason why you are scared of entering the gates of Papa's mansion is because the world outside is the world of 'I' and 'mine' and you are scared that if you enter the gates and your minds turn towards Papa, you would lose the world you have been hugging as yours. You do not realise that far from losing your world, you actually gain the whole universe which becomes yours when you realize infinite and eternal Papa."

Apparently these words of the Mother were uttered in a state of disappointment. After having seen many devotees coming to Beloved Papa and not making proper use of Beloved Papa's presence, she used to

express her feelings very often. She expected every one coming here, to become real seekers and strive hard to realize the supreme Godhead.

When she found that the visiting devotees and those staying in the Ashram were not serious about this, she was feeling very much upset. She expected every one to strive hard and when she did not find them doing that, she was very upset. We should have striven hard when Beloved Papa was with us in his physical body and tried our best to reach the goal. This would have satisfied our Beloved Mother and given her great joy but we did not do that. We were all playing like little children with the toys of the world and never cared seriously about the higher attainments. That was why she was expressing such feelings very often. This unhappiness whenever she thought of this subject continued till she dropped her body.

At least now, let us all try to make her happy. Now she is seated in our hearts and she will surely help us if we strive to attain our goal and she will bless us with all the best. Let us only sincerely strive for it. Let us not remain mere devotees. Let us become serious seekers and strive to attain the goal. Her blessings are always with us.

319. Memorable days with Beloved Papa and Pujya Mataji

It is a great privilege to closely move with saints and more so to have occasions to serve them. Such occasions provide opportunities to witness the actions of saints, which for them are spontaneous and ordinary. But such actions make indelible impressions in the minds of those who witness.

Beloved Papa and Mataji, after having reached the supreme goal of a human being, i.e. the realization of their oneness with the Supreme Being and the entire manifested world, chose to make Anandashram a field for putting into action the universal love they both had experienced as a result of their universal vision. For them, doing anything for anybody was to serve God. For them any situation, however apparently good or bad, was brought about by God only, as God is the only doer. Ordinary man, whose vision has not expanded into infinity, would be shaken when something very unpleasant happens. But the wider vision helps the saints to stand firm and unshaken, whatever may happen.

The most memorable event in my life was when I was sitting with Papa during my first visit to the Ashram and explaining to him my then state of mind and my prayer that he should not push me back into worldly life. Papa

seriously thought for a few minutes and said very lovingly. "Ramdas is thinking of keeping you here in the Ashram. But the right time has not come yet. You may now go home and Ramdas will call you when the time comes." This assured me of a place close to Papa and Mataji and I was jubilant over it.

The most important turning point in my life was when I was talking to Papa, about my inability to maintain equanimity while engaged in activities and therefore about my craving for a solitary life. Papa immediately understood my condition and suggested that I should go to Rishikesh and adopt *Sannyas*, stay alone, doing meditation. Next day he himself got a couple of sets of clothes dyed in red ochre along with a woollen shawl. The dying was done in the Udyog Shala under his personal supervision. At the time of leaving, he gave me the clothes and shawl and said: "Have a clean shave, bathe in *Brahma Kund* and discarding the white clothes, put on ochre robes. Take the oath of *Sannyas* and find out a suitable place for stay and *Sadhana*. You may assume the name *SATCHIDANANDA* or *ANANTANANDA*."

Mataji was not happy when she heard from Papa that I was advised to leave for Rishikesh and adopt *Sannyas*. She asked why I should go anywhere, as, according to her,

serving the Guru is a better *Sadhana* than any other. Here the real Mother's heart was revealed. As I was also inclined to go and Papa supported it, Mataji reluctantly agreed.

Travelling with Papa and Mataji in trains and cars was another experience. Papa was always jubilant in his moods and would crack jokes whenever possible. On the other hand Mataji did not enjoy travels at all. Yet she saw to it that Papa was served as best as possible under the conditions prevailing during train travel. She was the real Mother and Papa and myself were two children for her. She did not limit the service to two of us. Anybody else in the compartment also got the same treatment.

The days of travels with Papa and Mataji are really unforgettable. Travel life was much different from the routine life in Ashram. Different places, different faces and different programmes. From early morning devotees would be visiting Papa who would greet them with great joy and would spend some time with everyone, talking about various matters. Papa used to be in an ecstatic state always and during the talks with the devotees there used to be a lot of fun and laughter. Papa was not concerned with anything else as Mataji managed everything and myself assisting her.

Needless to say those were unforgettable moments. Even after remaining

with Papa for one or two hours, the devotees were not in a mood to leave. Mataji then would come and stand near the door, facing Papa. Taking this as a signal for them to leave, the devotees would leave one by one. Even in Papa's bedroom the members of the family of the host and some close friends would sit near Papa's bed. Papa would cut such jokes as would make them laugh and laugh; sometimes they had to hold their bellies to control the laughter.

During the tour Papa and Mataji would usually stay in the house of a devotee who would be in a position to make arrangements for other devotees to take part in the *Satsang* programmes in the same home and also outside somewhere. The devotees would start pouring in right from early morning. Some of them would return home after spending a few minutes with Papa and Mataji. Many would stay on. Mataji saw to it that each and every devotee present there was given breakfast, lunch or dinner. So the kitchen would be busy preparing the food for the innumerable devotees coming to have Papa's *darshan*. With the *Satsang* on one side and the feeding of many another side, the house would be like one having a huge celebration.

In the beginning some of the hosts who had not seen such mass feeding at such short notice were nervous. But Mataji gave them

courage and they also were very happy that Papa and Mataji made them instruments for such service to devotees. So wherever Papa and Mataji went, a festive atmosphere was created and it was all joy — a feast for the soul and feast for the body.

The most elevating experience when we are with saints is to see them meeting other saints. This happens rarely. I had the privilege of witnessing Papa and Mataji meeting Sri Swami Anandashram, Swami Parijnanashram, Sri Bhai Vir Singh, Sri Shankaracharya of Puri, Sri Vinoba Bhave, Sri Taki Maharaj, Sri Punit Maharaj, Sai Sattar Shah and many others. Papa's humility, Papa's joy and Papa's reverence for them cannot be explained in words. It has to be seen and enjoyed. They meet joyfully like children and converse with each other so lovingly and guilelessly that those blessed to witness the same are transported to higher realms of consciousness.

These are the special blessings we enjoy when we have the privilege to live and move with saints. Such blessed moments cannot be had anywhere else.

320. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in a very humble way inaugurated the Divine Life Society sixty years ago. The

seed that he sowed that day was so strong and powerful that soon it sprouted and grew into a huge tree with branches spread all over India and abroad. We are all now eating the sweet fruits of that tree. Swamiji Maharaj during his *Sadhana* days, to realise God, himself did intense *Tapasya*. He was also serving the ailing ones taking his medical kit to different places near Swargashram. So you can imagine, from that very time he was fond of serving people, serving humanity. After realisation and having enjoyed the supreme bliss himself, he wanted to give that bliss to the entire humanity and worked hard towards that goal. He wrote innumerable letters, he printed a number of pamphlets and also wrote a number of books so that the aspiring ones might read them and follow the path leading to the supreme goal.

He knew that people in the world were suffering much. Very few were really happy. He also knew that the reason for their unhappiness was not poverty or lack of education or lack of anything but it was only ignorance. So what was necessary was to remove that ignorance that prevented them from enjoying the bliss of the Eternal. He did try very hard from the beginning of his life in Rishikesh by writing letters to deserving/aspiring devotees, by publishing any number

of books and he worked tirelessly day and night for this purpose.

Besides working hard himself, he prepared a number of his representatives/disciples to establish centres in different parts of India and abroad so that the teachings of the great Rishis might reach all nooks and corners of this blessed earth, and, we can say confidently now, that he has been quite successful though the message has to reach many more parts of the world and we are sure, by the work done by our Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, the head of the institution now, the message will still spread wider and wider, enabling many aspirants to be guided on the spiritual path and reach the supreme goal.

About The Author

Pujya Swami Satchidanandaji, known as Anantasivan in Purvashram, after a period of struggles and trials in his early life, came under the spell of the unique personality of Beloved Papa (Swami Ramdas) in 1949. His age then was 30. Beloved Papa saw a keen aspirant in him and Anantasivan



found his Guru in Beloved Papa. At the behest of Beloved Papa, he took to the order of Sannyas and dedicated his entire life to the service of God by loving and serving others. Beloved Papa and Pujya Mataji through their loving care and concern hastened his march towards the Source of all sources. The path he adopted to attain the Ultimate was Nama Japa, Guru Seva and dedicated service to all. Since then he served the great masters, Beloved Papa and Mataji, throughout their lifetime.

After the Mahasamadhi of Beloved Papa in 1963, Swamiji assisted Pujya Mataji in the day to day affairs of the Ashram. Pujya Mataji was silently grooming Swamiji to equip him fully for carrying out the noble mission they had started. In 1989, when Pujya Mataji cast off the mortal coil, the mantle of running the Ashram fell on Pujya Swamiji.

True to the divine Sankalpa of Beloved Papa and Pujya Mataji, Swamiji, with his exemplary qualities, became the guiding spirit of the Ashram, following the footsteps of these great Masters.

Pujya Swamiji attained Maha Samadhi on the 12th of October 2008.